



The Paw Print

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



Upcoming Events:

Join the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum Team as we rededicate the South Carolina War Dog Memorial in Columbia, South Carolina on Veterans Day, 2025.

Contact John Homa for questions:

Events @mwdhm.org

Volume 5 Issue 11

November 2025

Specialized Search Dogs Of The United States Marine Corps



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RED SEA (Aug. 19, 2019) Lance Cpl. Patrick Rivera, a military working dog handler assigned to the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), pets Rosie, a specialized search dog, after a live-fire exercise aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4). The Boxer Amphibious Ready Group and 11th MEU are deployed to the US 5th Fleet area of operations in support of naval operations to ensure maritime stability and security in the Central Region, connecting the Mediterranean and the Pacific through the Western Indian Ocean and three strategic choke points. (US Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Dalton S. Swanbeck/Released)

A Specialized Search Dog was one type of Military Working Dog used during the War on Terror: the Specialized Search Dog Course, a 93-day program, trained handlers and dogs together.

For the first 76 days, the dog and handler worked closely to learn the skills required for off-leash capability at Lackland Air Force

Base. An additional 17 days were required at Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona, honing those skills in realistic settings.

The training taught the dog to search for and detect explosives off-leash. This skill enabled the handler to maintain a greater standoff distance in the event of a detonation. It also allowed

for faster search time, as the handler did not constrain the dog.

The SSD capability saved untold numbers of lives during recent memory and deserves to be honored.

The program has been discontinued, but in this issue, we pay homage to the Marine Corps SSD heritage. 🐾

From the President's Desk



President, Albert Johnson



Join us in celebrating all Veterans on Veterans Day!

My favorite month is upon us. November 10 is a significant day to me, as it marks my second birthday, just as it is for all Marines. On November 10, back in 1775, the Marine Corps came alive! Many of you know that the Marine Corps was born in a bar called Tun Tavern. I have decided not to give you a history lesson today, but instead look back at my own time in the Marine Corps SSD program. Many of you who have followed us for any length of time know the story of me and my partner, SSD Johnny, but few will know of my first SSD, Rexi J295.

I trained Rexi at Lackland AFB, along with a dog named Udo. My first partner, Udo, a white Labrador, quickly zeroed in on explosives during our training. However, he would attack the explosive odor, C4, with a simulated blast outcome. That's not really the response you want in a bomb-sniffing dog. Udo, who was recycled to the class behind us, paired up with an army handler. After fixing Udo's flaws, they went on to do great things and save many lives, but I digress.

While his records say that Rexi's breed was a German Shepherd Dog, I believe Rexi was a cross between a Malinois and a GSD due to his looks and actions. A stubborn and independent dog, it took a long time to gain his respect as his handler. It took me getting bitten and me biting back to cement our relationship, but once we bonded, we were like a bomb-sniffing machine.

I recall the first long-distance search we conducted in school; it was a mess. After searching for a quarter mile, Rexi got bored and took off searching for the desert cotton-tails darting through the brush on base. I chased that dog for at least a half mile, getting close to him

but not close enough to snatch him up, not once but twice, before I finally got him back under control. To divert his attention back to me, we completed five minutes of up-down drills (down command followed by a sit command). After that, he focused on me like a laser. We completed the half-mile search like champs, erasing all my doubts about being partnered with such a strong-willed dog.



Fast forward to our first deployment. We went to Jalalabad, Afghanistan, to work with a Special Forces team. I would love to say we hit it off and made everyone feel comfortable with us leading patrols; however, once we gave them a demonstration, it all unraveled quickly. Rexi decided he would hunt the person who planted the explosives rather than find the explosives. He was trying to use his eyes and track everything visually instead of relying on his nose. It was infuriating, but working with dogs keeps you humble.

After a month of retraining, we were ready to take on the world. He went on to do many roadside and open area searches, and even some hard-knock raids. Throughout the rest of the deployment, he worked like a rock star. Serving as a tremendous psychological deterrent, he cleared areas like a champ. At the end of the deployment, I knew in my heart that everywhere Rexi searched, we were safe.

When I got back from that deployment, I took leave, and when I returned, they told me Rexi would need to have his tail docked. He hated being couped up in a kennel, and had beat his tail along the walls so severely that he had an open wound that wouldn't heal. During his recovery, a short-fuse mission needed a dog team, which was when I was partnered with Johnny F728.

Rexi went on to heal and was transferred to the army in Germany. He went on to do several deployments and passed away from natural causes at the age of 10. Thanks for allowing me to remember my first dog. As always,

K9 leads the way!

Albert Johnson

If you know a Veteran in Crisis, the VA Veteran's Crisis Line is: Dial 988, Then Press 1.

USMC SSD Teams: Mission Accomplished

by Dixie Whitman

In the photo at right, Marine Sgt. Posha, a specialized search dog (SSD), sits with his partner, Marine Cpl. William Soutra, military working dog handler, after a training demonstration at Camp Echo, Iraq, January 7, 2009.

On a 2010 deployment, during a Special Operations mission in Hyderabad, Afghanistan, this team endured the ultimate test of their partnership abilities during a ferocious multi-day battle.

For his heroism, Marine Corps Sgt. William Soutra received the Navy Cross medal on behalf of the President of the United States during an award ceremony at Camp Pendleton. The Navy Cross is the Department of the Navy's second-highest award for individuals who distinguish themselves for extraordinary heroism in combat with an armed enemy force. Sgt. Soutra said that half of the Navy Cross belonged to Posha.



Army photo by Sgt. Rodney Foliente



Photo courtesy Albert Johnson

"Marine Gunnery Sgt. Lucca, a specialized search dog, and Marine Staff Sgt. Chris Willingham, military working dog handler, Security Battalion, based out of Camp Pendleton, Calif., and attached to STB, 2nd BCT, 4th Inf. Div., share a hug at Camp Echo, Jan. 10, 2009 photo.

"Willingham, who hails from Tuscaloosa, Ala., credits Lucca with saving his life twice on a previous deployment. The pair has been together for more than two

years. Willingham is also the kennel master of the Camp Echo K9 team."¹

Since this 2009 photo, Chris and Lucca have been featured in the New York Times bestseller, Top Dog, and Chris now leads the US War Dogs Association, another success of the SSD program.

¹ DVIDS - Images - From man's best friend to service member's best friend - K9s help accomplish mission in Iraq [Image 4 of 4]. <https://www.dvidshub.net/image/146827/mans-best-friend-service-members-best-friend-k9s-help-accomplish-mission-iraq>

Cpl. Albert Johnson and SSD Johnny F178 completed numerous missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

SSD candidates are not required to be aggressive, as they work off-leash. That memo did not reach Johnny, whose bite was worse than his bark. And, his bark was pretty intimidating.

The dedication and love displayed between this handler

and his dog resulted in a strong bond of devotion.

To honor his partner and all of the members of the military K9 community, Albert has taken the helm of the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum and works tirelessly to conserve and share the history and heritage of America's military working dogs and the people who love them.



Army photo by Sgt. Rodney Foliente

“Cpl. Justin Kosiewska signals commands to his military working dog, Quila, during an explosive detection training exercise as part of Mountain Warfare Training in Bridgeport, Calif., Aug. 27, 2017.

specialize in patrolling, combat tracking, explosive detection and apprehending suspects.

“Kosiewska is a dog handler with 2nd Law Enforcement Battalion, Ashley Kennel.”²

²<https://www.dvidshub.net/image/3729784/specialized-search-dog-trains-ied-detection-during-mountain-warfare-training>

“Mountain Warfare Training helps build resilience and physical conditioning in the military working dogs, who



US Marine Corps Photo by Lance Cpl. Gloria Lepko



US Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Harrison Rakhshani

USMC handler, Alex Farias, poses with his partner, SSD Benny A170. After a grueling training scenario, SSD Benny received his reward—a tennis ball.

Even though Benny was a Labrador retriever, he was high drive, high prey, and all business.

Together, Farias and Benny worked with the III MEF (Marine Expeditionary Force) on Okinawa. They supported the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). Also, they com-

pleted a mission to support the Navy base at Guam when a carrier went down and increased personnel on the small Pacific base during the COVID-19 pandemic. Alex is proud to be one of the last dog handlers to complete the SSD course, with Benny as one of the last of the SSD line. The military has discontinued specialized search dog training. 🐾

“Chad, a specialized search dog receives a belly rub after completing a route search, Aug. 7, 2018, aboard Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan. Chad is with Military Working Dog Platoon, Headquarters & Service Company, 3rd Law Enforcement Battalion.

gate a course hiding multiple inactive improvised explosive devices. The training was conducted to assess the capabilities and overall readiness of canine teams.”³

³<https://www.dvidshub.net/image/4628218/mans-best-friend-and-fiercest-foe>

“During a route search, canines are tasked to navi-



Photo courtesy Alex Farias

USCG Working Handler and Canine Spotlight: ME1 Whitaker and Ultra

by Shannon Campbell

Social media is everywhere, and happily, sometimes it leads you to a treasure trove of information. With help from a certain (very helpful- he knows who he is if he is reading this) administrator of USCG K9 (unofficial Instagram page), I was lucky to be connected with a five-year-old German Shepherd/Dutch Shepherd mix. Her handler kindly provided a glimpse into the life of a US Coast Guard Explosives Detection K9 for The Paw Print.

Meet Ultra:

Ultra, weighing 52 pounds and unofficially going by the nickname of "Bug," is stationed at the Maritime Safety and Security Team (MSST) New York with her handler, ME1 Whitaker.

Initial thoughts on the Ultra when you were first paired?

"I can't believe they gave me the smallest dog in the class," but honestly, the second we started working together, I completely understood the pairing. We worked so smoothly together, and the more time I've spent with her, the more I realize our personalities match so well.

Were there any hurdles you had to get through with Ultra over your time together?

She is very protective of me, so when she stares daggers at my husband, I have to remind her that we like him!

How many sweeps have you conducted as a team? Are you always ready to go on a sweep?

Honestly, that is hard to answer because there have probably been close to a thousand over our three years together. We are conducting multiple sweeps every time we go out. Ultra is always ready to work and gets really excited when we start to gear up.

What is the largest venue/sweep you have done? What is your favorite venue?

The largest venue Ultra and I have swept was Fenway Park on Patriots Day. My favorite event we have worked at, however, was the Super Bowl in New Orleans.

Most memorable sweep to date with Ultra and why?

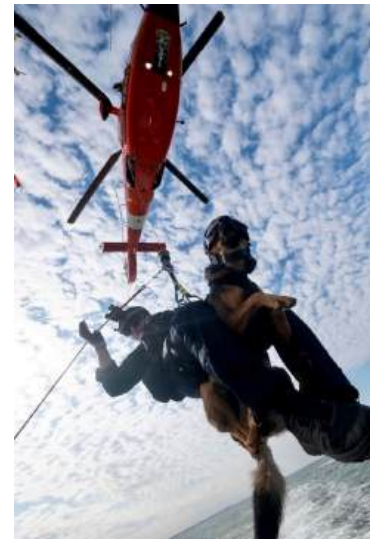
My most memorable sweep was when we drove in the Vice Presidential motorcade during the DNC in



ME1 Whitaker and her partner, K9 Ultra, pose together in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2020. (Photo credit Instagram @illinois_fiveo)



This photo, taken at the 60th Presidential Inauguration in January 2025. (Photo credit ME1 Whitaker)



K9 vertical delivery training. ME1 Whitaker and her partner, K9 Ultra. (US Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Breanna Boardman)



Super Bowl, New Orleans (2025); Credit: USCG Public Affairs



Vertical Delivery training. Credit: USCG Public Affairs Detachment New York

Chicago. We stopped at every vehicle or obstacle on the route to clear it prior to the VP driving through. It was one of those surreal moments where you actually see the impact you're making in real time.

Is there a "ritual" you do with Ultra before starting a sweep?

It's not so much a ritual, rather than just playing with her and getting her excited, which helps her get in the zone.

Ultra's favorite toy/game/pastime?

Ultra loves to play fetch; her favorite toy rotates to whichever one isn't destroyed at the moment. Currently, it is a grenade-shaped chew toy.

As a K9 handler, what additional canine care training do you have to take?

We take as many K9 first aid classes as often as we can. You can never train too much when it comes to life-saving measures.

Does Ultra work with other handlers? (If you were sick or had a family

emergency, who does she stay with?)

Ultra does not work with other handlers. If I were out sick, then she would be lying next to me, helping me feel better. If one handler were to go down for whatever reason, we always have another Coast Guard canine team that would "pick up the slack."

Other information that you'd like to share about being a K9 Handler or about Ultra?

This is arguably the best job in the Coast Guard,

and it has provided me with opportunities that I never could have imagined when I first joined.

I'd like to give a big shout out to K9 Ultra's handler—as a follower of Ultra—the amount of admiration and respect I have for her and her passion for protecting our country is immeasurable. She provided detailed information and took time during what was a very busy six weeks. 🐾

See you in Columbia!

Training of Dogs at Lejeune Is Remarkable Story of Control

Reprint February 4, 1944 Onslow County News and Views

A man, clothed in heavy padding, leaped menacingly at the crouched dog. He shouted, taunted, and gesticulated at the still-quiet animal, but still no responsive movement.

Suddenly, another voice was heard. "Get 'im," it said quietly. With one lunge, the dog was off the ground and, in a moment, had the man by the arm. "Out," the voice said in a tone hardly above a whisper. The dog released its grip on the padded arm.

So another Marine Corps war dog passed one of its obedience tests.

Behind this remarkable example of control is the story of the training given to dogs at the US Marine Corps Dog Training Company at this Marine Corps base.

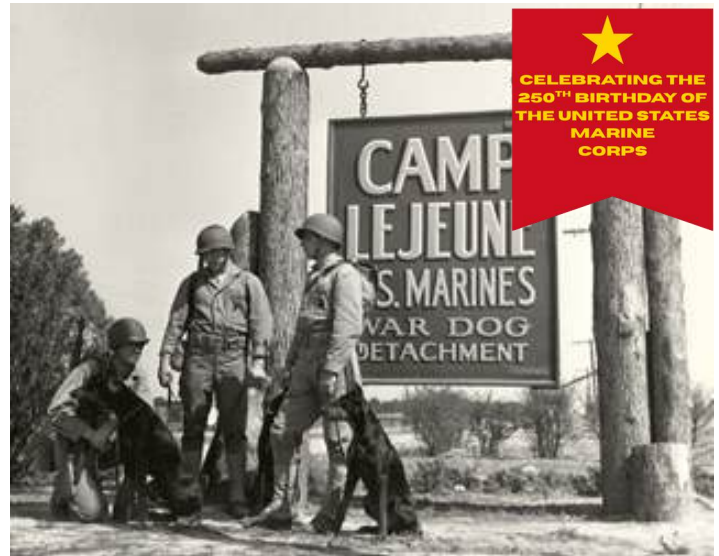
From here, several platoons of animals, which have been offered to the Marine Corps by their owners for the duration, have gone into combat with the fighting Leathernecks in the South Pacific area. Already six of them have been cited for outstanding performance under fire by General Thomas Holcomb, (Ret.), after exemplary work against the Japanese on Bougainville.

That future citations will be awarded to Camp Lejeune-trained dogs is certain. Their training here is one of

vigorous action for fourteen weeks. During the first two weeks the dogs are segregated and every effort is made to eradicate any feeling of "homesickness."

The next six weeks are devoted to training the dogs to obey instantly, interpret various commands, and perform rigorous fieldwork. Marine Captain Jackson H. Boyd, commanding officer, said successful training of war dogs is accomplished only through intelligent handling and patient, sympathetic treatment. Day after day the dogs are taken to the training fields where their handlers march with them, run with them, praise them for good work or correct them after faulty performances. "Heel", command their handlers and the dogs affectionally crowd against the left legs of their Marine masters. At the command of "sit," "down," or "lie down," the animals faithfully obey.

The final six weeks of the course are given over to advanced training. The rugged obstacle course which comprises every conceivable type of hazard is run many times. Under and over wire barricades, across ditches, through streams and over fences the dogs go, always on the alert for their handlers' orders.



The Commandant of the Marine Corps penned a letter to the Commanding General at New River, North Carolina on 26 November 1942. This correspondence directed the Commanding General to create a Marine Corps war dog program. Prior to that time, Marines trained with Army and Coast Guard handlers at Fort Robinson, NE. Photo from the National Archives.

Marine Corps dogs must be well-behaved. They are trained to remain absolutely quiet and noiseless, they are accustomed to battle noises, and finally, they are taken into mock battles between various Marine units training here. A dog which barks or whines is dismissed since such actions would betray their position in enemy territory. Again, a dog who is gun-shy would be of no use in the field.

The dogs are trained principally for scouting and messenger work. Officers observe their reactions and assign them after numerous tests. Some dogs are aggressively inquisitive and

make excellent scouting dogs, Captain Boyd said. Other animals which show an aptitude for messenger details are assigned to this type of duty.

Marines chosen as handlers are selected for their intelligence, character, and knowledge of scouting. "They would be successful scouts in any company," the captain said, "even without their dogs." They are intimately related to their assigned dogs from the first days of training. The men are required to take a 14-week course which parallels that of their dogs. Although previous experience in handling

dogs is not a prerequisite, the men must have a fondness for them. The men must also be in excellent physical condition.

Oddly enough, while the Marine-handler gives the orders in training, it is the dogs who must be followed in actual combat. The animals' keen sense of perception enable them to ascertain the presence of the enemy much quicker than their handlers. In the Bougainville campaign, Marine Corps dogs detected Japanese soldiers more than 100 yards distant from their own positions.

Captain Boyd emphasized that the dogs are not to be considered as a new weapon. "They have not replaced anyone or anything, they simply have added to security perception," he declared.

The Marine Corps has a decided preference for Doberman Pinschers and German shepherds. These two breeds have shown themselves to be exceptionally alert and suitable for combat duty. On occasion, however, other types have been trained here. The dogs work for the left side of their handlers, although they are trained to operate from either side. Being on the left, however, permits the Marines to use their weapons more effectively. All dogs which leave this base are instantaneous in their response to commands. They will attack any person when ordered to do so by their handlers.



Dogs such as Duke (above) and Butch (below) were donated to the United States Marine Corps by their owners for service in WWII.

Both photos from the National Archives.



"Marines and their war dogs are perfect examples of teamwork and co-ordination," Captain Boyd said.

After three months' service, the animals are rated Privates First Class. A promotion to corporal is given after 12 months' duty, and a sergeancy rating is awarded after another 12 months' service. Successive promotions, eventually to master gunnery sergeant, are provided for. Dogs may also be promoted in the field for outstanding performance. First Lieutenant L. Wilson Davis of Baltimore, Md., is head trainer of the company. First Lieutenant Clyde Henderson, of Cleveland, O., a former trainer here was in command of the first war dog unit which left the base for combat and has made an enviable record.

Captain Boyd, a native of Harrisburg, Pa., has resided in North Carolina since boyhood. He is a Master of Fox Hounds in Moore County. He served with the American Field Service (French Army) in 1916, later being transferred to the US Army. He was commissioned and served as captain with the 21st Field Artillery Regiment. Captain Boyd was commissioned in the Marine Corps in 1942. 🐾

The Onslow County news and views.
(Jacksonville, NC), Feb. 4 1944.
<https://www.loc.gov/item/sn92074060/1944-02-04/ed-1/>.

Statue Dedicated to Loring AFB K9s

by David Priest

On August 16, 2025, an addition to the Washburn, ME Veterans Park Military Park was dedicated, honoring former Loring AFB's Military Working Dogs of the 42nd Security Police Squadron. The dedication was the culmination of an eight-month effort by MSGT (RET) Larry Harrison and the Washburn, ME Rotary Club. [\[1\]](#)

The memorial features a bronze sculpture of a German Shepherd with a pathway of paving bricks with the names of MWDs and their handler leading up to the statue and a granite monument. The sculpture is named in honor of Ferro 659F, who was among the base's first local canine training class in 1964. His handler, James St. Thomas Jr., would later serve as NCOIC (Kennel Master) of Loring's K9 Section and retired as a MSgt. St. Thomas passed away in 2013. [\[2\]](#)

Approximately 100 people turned out for the dedication. Several Veterans from various Maine locations were among the attendees, including some who had served as handlers at Loring. Phylis Gurette, daughter of MSgt St. Thomas, cut the ceremonial ribbon.

David Priest, who served as a handler at Loring for two tours, 1968-1969 and 1970-1972, spoke at the dedication, reliving his experiences.

"Two score, one decade and seven years ago...I arrived at Loring AFB with Sentry Dog King X989.

"That gentleman over there, Donald Pelkey, is the reason I joined the USAF. In the fall of 1967, Don, whom I have known since grade school, was in the Air Force, he was telling me about the Security Police career field. That sounded interesting, so I looked into it. When the Air Force recruiter told me if I joined the Air Force and chose Security Police, the Air Force would issue me a German Shepherd! How could I say no to that!

"Long story short, I joined the Air Force in March of 1968 and went to Lackland Air Force Base for basic training. After basic, I went "A-W-A-L", all the way across Lackland to the Security Police Tech School. After Security Police Tech school, I attended USAF Sentry Dog School, again at Lackland.

"Sentry dog school was broken down to three parts, the first was the

academic part. It also was where we learned about the German Shepherd breed, and to handle a dog on leash by marching around the lawns by the barracks with a leash and choke chain attached to an ammo can yelling "GOOD BOY" and patting our left leg...We got a lot of strange looks from the airmen going past on the buses.

"The second part was when we received a dog! This was where we met our dogs and bonded with them and went through the basic obedience part of the program. Heel, sit, down, and stay were the basic commands. And lots of "GOOD BOY" praises

and solid pats on the ribs. My first dog was Shawn. He was excellent at basic obedience and just wanted to please me. He was awesome!

"The third part was aggression. Sadly, Shawn was not able to become aggressive, so was washed out of the program. I now needed another dog, so was issued King X989. King was a retread, as he had been through the program and had been stationed at Homestead AFB, Florida. King was only about 65lbs., but made up for it by being VERY aggressive.

"At the Sentry dog school, they scored on the aggregate, so as I had



The bronze GSD was named "Ferro" in honor of the Sentry Dog handled by Jim St Thomas., a former Kennel Master at Loring AFB.

Photo courtesy David Priest



Above The Aroostook Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for the Military Working Dog Memorial located at the Veteran's Park in Washburn, ME. Pictured left to right: LaNiece Sirois, Executive Director, Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce (CACC); Dave Priest, K9 Handler; Phyllis Guerrette, daughter of Jim St. Thomas K-9 Handler; Donald Pelkey, K9 Handler; Jennifer Olson, CACC Board Member; Ryan Rackliffe, CACC Board Member; K-9 Officer, Isaac Wipperman; K9 Titan; Chief Matt Cummings, aa Fairfield P.D.; Sharon St. Thomas, wife of James St. Thomas; Anthony St. Thomas, grandson of James St. Thomas. Photo courtesy David Priest.

Below: The plaque at the memorial. In the group photo on the top right back. Top Row: (L-R) Philip Berry, UNK, David, Kelley and Donald Reeves. Kneeling: Althol Cooper and Danny Webb. The bottom row (L-R): 1964 Dog Demo Team; Unk; Jim St. Thomas and Farro 659F; David Priest and King X989; and Donald Pelkey and Duke 1X37. Photo courtesy David Priest.



scored high in academics, Shawn had done well in the obedience portion, and King aced the aggression, it took the three of us, but I was the honor graduate of my Sentry Dog Class.

"In September 1968, I received my orders, Loring AFB, Maine! King and I caught a ride to Kelly AFB and boarded a cargo plane, I have no idea what it was, and flew to Wright Patterson AFB in Ohio, where we spent the night. The next day, we left Wright-Patt and landed at several AFBs on our way to Loring, where we arrived in the middle of the night. Someone from the K9 section picked us up, and we started our stay at Loring.

"I was at Loring until October 1969, when I received orders for Korat Royal Thai AFB in Thailand. I was at Korat for a year handling Sentry Dog George when I again received orders for Loring AFB. On my return, I handled Dirk, a 116lb. German shepherd. In 1971, Dirk and I went to Lackland AFB, where he headed off to Korea as a Sentry Dog, and I was assigned Skeeze, and we went through Patrol Dog School together, then

returned to Loring until February 1972, when I was discharged.

"There is seldom a day I don't think of my K9 buddies; I really miss them! Often, when I was a Special Investigator for Maine Revenue Services and in Aroostook County every two weeks, I would pick up a pizza at the Rendezvous, then drive to the Sentry Dog Section to eat lunch and reminisce.

"In 2017, David Cyr, an Eagle Scout, refurbished the old Sentry Dog Cemetery at Loring AFB. On August 24, 2019, Cyr's work was dedicated by the Loring Air Museum. Sadly, in the six years since the property has changed hands, and the old Sentry Dog Cemetery has waned away.

"I am very pleased Larry Harrison and the Washburn Rotary Club have stepped up and provided this memorial to honor and remember the military dogs of the former Loring AFB. Thank you!" 🐾

[1] Bangor Daily News; "An Aroostook Monument Will Honor Loring's Guard Dogs," by Paula Brewer, August 8, 2025

[2] Ibid

USMC


CELEBRATING THE
250TH BIRTHDAY OF
THE UNITED STATES
MARINE
CORPS



Marine Corps K9s

DoD Photographers



*Military Working Dog
Heritage Museum &
Handler Center
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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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Recycle, please.



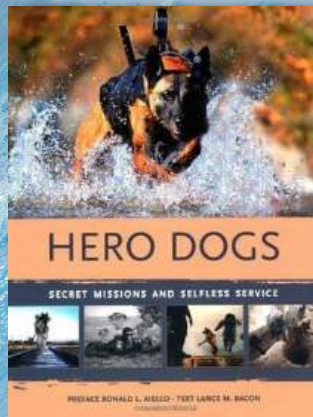
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our newsletter.**

Book of the Month



Hero Dogs – Secret Missions and Selfless Service, by Ronald Aiello and Lance Bacon, is next on my “must read” list. This selection is something a little different, a photographic book salute to dogs in combat through the decades. Ron is a Vietnam War military working dog handler with the First Marine Scout Dog Platoon and, in 2000, formed the United States War Dogs Association. Ron is an absolute workhorse when it comes to our war dogs. Gorgeous photos abound from WWI and up, with the bulk covering Afghanistan and Iraq. It may be a hard find, but it's well worth it for your coffee table. ~ Joel Burton
Buy it [HERE!](#)

Submitted Photo of the Month



This submitted photo is from USMC dog handler, Alex Farias, with his SSD dog, Benny A170.

After a hard day of training, they took a break. During COVID, DoD requirements included masks and distancing, which made time spent with K9 partners even more important.