



DOGMAN

A Brotherhood of All Combat Veteran Dog Handlers



VIETNAM DOG HANDLER ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 27 - NUMBER 1 - MARCH 2020

20 Year Re-Dedication of War Dog Memorial

By Ernie Ayala
VDHA Vice President

Jeff Bennett pulled off a remarkable program celebrating 20 years of the War Dog Memorial at March Air Base.

The singing of the National Anthem was done acapella by my grandnephew Damien Ayala and his duet partner Candy Dangerfield. They sang it beautifully as the Honor Guard brought in the colors from two local American Legions.

Speeches were given by California Supreme Court Justice (and US Veteran) Ming W. Chin and Major General Paul D. Eaton, retired. These speakers gave speeches on the first unveiling in 2000.

Also speaking were A. Thomas Schomberg, the world-renowned Sculptor who created this memorial along with the Veterans Memorial and the Rocky Sculpture in Philadelphia.

Our president John Harvey also spoke on behalf of our involvement in the partnership of bringing this historic memorial to fruition.

Around 30-35 former dog handlers in attendance laid roses at the foot of the statue as war dog songs played in the background. As they did that, VDHA unit directors Jim Watson (8th SPS Air Force) and John Wayne Cloud (Hawk Missile Base, 18th MP Brigade Army) read the names of the fallen dog handler veterans and the late cast members

from the War Dogs documentary.

Three posters also displayed the names of the fallen VDHA members who died in the year 2019, as more and more are starting to leave us now.

There were military and law enforcement K9 demonstrations after the ceremony by US Marine Corps K9 units from Camp Pendleton and the Riverside Police Department K9 unit, as well.

Dog handlers lined up to receive their goody package after the ceremony which included a commemorative T-shirt, cap, a replica poster from the first unveiling with the autographs of the original cast and the DVD of the documentary War Dogs, America's Forgotten Heroes and some of the

other dog handlers who were in attendance.

My experience working with Jeff Bennett wasn't always a fun job; I had to redesign my artwork for the T-shirt about 20 times. My hat design never did make it and another artist designed it. I have to say I like the hat very much and it is top quality, way better than anything I dreamed.

Jeff did not scrimp on anything. Everything was top quality. Now that it's over I can appreciate all the work that went into producing this program. Bennett said he wants to do an even bigger program for the 25th Silver Anniversary. So, pencil yourself in for 2025 to be here as we will never stop celebrating the dogs and the handlers who did so much to be part of history.



Dog Handlers line up to place roses and give a salute to the memorial.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

By John R. Harvey
VDHA President

After twenty years the chills and thrills still linger.

It was February 2000, my 17-year-old son and I began one of our "road trips" by taking a flight from Hartford, CT to San Diego, CA. My son was in his senior year of high school. Similar to many of us, I didn't talk much about "the war." The War, meaning the Vietnam War and the role I played.

Our families knew that we took our hats off and placed them over our hearts at parades and ball fields when our flag passed by. But they never quite understood the chills that ran up our spines. Was it our fault that we could not explain our dislike of fireworks on holidays particularly the fourth of July? Should they have tried harder to understand our anxieties, or should we have tried harder to explain them?

This road trip would be different I told myself. Our destination was the dedication of a new War Dog memorial at March Field Air Museum in Riverside California. The documentary "*War Dogs, America's Forgotten Heroes*" had recently been released in VHS format after playing on the Discovery Channel. The documentary and the memorial were in recognition of the service and sacrifice our K-9 soldiers had made.

For many of us it was a blunt force hit in the head realizing what had been the final fate of the warriors we left behind. My hope that weekend was that my son would gain a greater understanding about the words never spoken by his father. I recently asked him what he remembered about the trip. His response was that he remembered it to be very emotional. I don't believe that he can connect the reasons why, even today. For me it was a coming home. It was a chance to connect with a group of men who had had the same love and loyalty for our dogs who had protected us and the men around us.

February 2020 I had the enormous privilege of retracing those steps with a new companion. We had been invited by Mr. Jeffrey Bennett, the original organizer and benefactor of the memorial, Thomas Schomberg, the renowned artist, Tim Prokup and Gary Benz, the producers and writers of the documentary, to join in the 20th anniversary celebration.

It was exciting to stand and have Tom Mitchell lead us in the pledge of allegiance and listen to California Supreme Court Justice, Honorable Ming W. Chin, give a heartfelt remembrance. In an early conversation, Jeff stated that he wanted this ceremony to not only honor and remember our dogs but to also bring honor and remembrance to their handlers particularly the members of the VDHA. There was a Reading of the Fallen, listing

those original participants in the documentary who had passed away and those handlers we lost in 2019.

We arrived late on Friday night, Fort Lauderdale to LAX. I got up early Saturday morning and insisted that the first thing we did was go out to the memorial. After walking around for an hour, I agreed that it was time to get something to eat. Later my partner would ask, "why did we have to come out here to the memorial this morning when we will be here all day tomorrow?" My mind suddenly went blank. Those words that I wanted to express, what I felt, continued their 50 year escape. I tried to explain the rush of emotions. I finally turned to her and said, "I didn't know what I was going to feel tomorrow at the rededication ceremony and I wanted to prepare myself." Those few words connected and finally someone began to understand.

The ceremony was both a somber occasion and a celebration. It was recognition of not only the service and sacrifice of our dogs, but also the men who served at the other end of the leash. We honored those handlers who have passed away before us and celebrated the lives of those still amongst us.

The words of explanation may escape us for the moment, but the chills and thrills are always there.



Sixth Graders Raise Money to Honor War Dogs

By Trudy Debolt

I'm proud of what my 6th grade students have done this year to honor the dogs who so faithfully served their handlers in Vietnam.

There is a dog fountain in Ontario, Canada, that features dogs of all breeds. All of the dogs have a nozzle in their mouths, and when the fountain is operational, the water shoots into the fountain. There was only ONE of these fountains in the world.

Well, we JUST HAPPEN to have an incredible lady in our town who loves dogs. She met the artist of that fountain and was willing to pay him the money to put a smaller version of that fountain in our city, Mount Vernon, Ohio.

I was interviewed about my WAGS program by Phil and Mary Samuell. The WAGS program is my reading program that I started to honor the Vietnam war dogs that were left behind by our government when all the soldiers were brought home. The word WAGS stands for "Working Dog Awareness Group Students."

I have 70 sixth grade student readers who I rotate through on a monthly calendar. They are completely volunteers and give their hearts to what they do. The students bring a book and read to the dogs at our local Animal Shelter. They spend an hour sitting in front of a dog's kennel reading softly to help bring peace and comfort to the dogs. Giving up their free time on a Saturday because of the love in their hearts has earned

lots of media coverage for my program and the students involved!

Come to find out, Phil Samuell is on the Mount Vernon, Ohio, Dog Fountain committee! They were in the process of getting the dogs sponsored and paid for so the fountain could be completed. He said there would be a German Shepherd statue, and I asked how much it would cost us. His answer was: \$15,000. I told him there was no way we could raise that much money. We have 68% poverty at our school, and \$2,004 is the most any class has ever raised.

That night he called me. He had talked to the fountain committee and they were going to allow us to sponsor the dog for \$2,000 if we could raise that much. They had found other people who would pay the rest and remain anonymous so this sixth grade class could sponsor and NAME the dog.

After only three weeks of collecting donations, our sixth graders not only raised \$2,004 but went way beyond to raise \$2,619. As usual, many students sacrificed their lunches. Many kids dug change out of couches. Many students emptied their savings accounts, and many simply kept asking more and more people to donate. Many children did all of these things to support this project they so loved.

That money was matched dollar for dollar by the Ariel Foundation in Mount Vernon and the Mount
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Trudy Debolt and 17 of her sixth graders who read to dogs and raised the money to bring Prince to Mount Vernon.

Ft. Benning Re-Dedication Pink Eye and 35th SPS K9

By Albert Johnson

The Military Working Dog Heritage Museum and Handler Center, a newly-forming non-profit, in conjunction with the 904th Military Police Detachment Working Dog Kennels, is hosting the Re-Dedication of the War Dog Memorial and Pedestals in a ceremony to be held at Fort Benning, GA at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 3, 2020.

This ceremony will commemorate the 20th anniversary of the War Dog Memorial installed on Sacrifice Field at Fort Benning in October of 2000. It will also honor the heritage and history of America's Military Working Dog Teams.

Plans for the event are currently underway and more details will be provided as they become available. We are honored that Chris Willingham, a former dog handler featured with his Specialized Search Dog, Lucca, in the New York Times best seller, *Top Dog*, is scheduled to deliver the key note speech. The talented kennel staff, under the leadership of SFC Nathan Leo, Fort Benning Kennel Master, will present a dog demonstration and tour of the kennel. The ever-entertaining SFC Leo will also serve as the Master of Ceremonies at the event.

Please save the date and join us for what promises to be an exceptional weekend of remembrance and re-dedication. For any questions, you may contact events@mwdhm.org. Additional updates will be posted at <https://mwdheritagemuseum.org> and <http://vdha.us> as quickly as possible.



**War Dog Memorial
Re-Dedication**

**Sacrifice Field
Fort Benning, GA
October 3, 2020**

Save the Date

By Craig Lord, 35th SPS K9

Phan Rang 68-69 - Winston A170

Phan Rang, like most Air Force Air Bases (ABs) in Vietnam had advantages and disadvantages geographically. Phan Rang was chosen by the Air Force as an air base due to its central location and all around good flying weather. For the most part, the terrain was flat and desert-like except for some rice paddies towards the beach, Phan Rang City, and the hamlet of Tap Cham and what was known as the "strip" towards the South and Southeast.

The one exception to flat was Nui Dat, a hill that was in the middle of the base, ideal for a Security Command Post. Note: There was more than one Nui Dat in Vietnam. I met an Australian Vietnam vet a couple of years ago in Sydney and he was at Nui Dat near Vung Tau. The Security Command Post's call sign in '68-'69 was "Starlight Control" and they were on top of the hill. They could pretty much hear everything and see everything with the equipment they had. One of those pieces of equipment was known as "Pink Eye."

Pink Eye was a major league million plus candle power spot light that could check lots of things out. It was called "Pink Eye" because if you looked at the center it was pink. Security tested "Pink Eye" every night.

It Goes Down Hill From Here: Sometime in late '68 or early '69, K9 was mandated to take malaria pills, known as the orange pills. Well Ok! Unfortunately, we were never told that these things would make you have the runs until your brains fell into your boots.

My Night in the Lights: So I was given my little orange pill at guardmount before I went to post and I woofed it down with a short swig of water from my canteen. I was assigned to the last post in the Hotel area next to the 101st Airborne on the early shift, a normally quiet post. I lifted Winston off the blue ton-and-a-half stake-bed truck and put him on the ground. As soon as the truck left, I felt an urgency as bad as a pilot having to eject when his plane is on fire. I let go of Winston's leash, unbuckled my web belt and camo pants, and it was horrible. So who shows up for a test: Pink Eye! I was lit up like Mick Jagger at a Rolling Stones concert. There I was, squatting and suffering with nothing I could do. I finally got composed and decided to respond because I had not called in that my post was clear at the start of my shift. It went like this:

KiloXX: Post clear, thanks Assholes. They keyed the mike and it was laughter. I never took another one of those pills.

Seeking VDHA Warrior's Medal of Valor Nominees

By John Harvey, VDHA President

VDHA members are asked once again to nominate active members for the prestigious Warrior's Medal of Valor. They will be awarded to two members at the VDHA Reunion in August in Washington DC. There are many of our members who deserve to be recognized with this very special honor for the achievements they may have accomplished in the past or are currently pursuing in their lives.

It recognizes VDHA members' exceptional efforts to make a difference in their communities or organizations, or for past military actions they have not been given due credit. Please take this opportunity to nominate someone deserving. There is no higher honor than to be recognized by a fellow veteran.

The award was originally created by Native American, Marshall Tall Eagle Serna of Woodburn, OR. Marshall Tall Eagle is a Vietnam veteran who served for 14 years in the Army and Air Force. He designed the medal in 2002. Soon after, it was approved as the official medal for presentation for all tribes desiring to use the medal to pay tribute to, and honor all veterans and current military personnel regardless of their cultural background.

In 2011 John Homa presented the idea to then President Fred Door and members attending the Orlando Reunion, see www.vdha.us/content25314.html on the VDHA web site for a complete background. Through discussions with Marshall Tall Eagle's family and purchases of the medals, the VDHA has been assured of the family's permission to award the medal to its members as appropriate.

The first two VDHA WMV awards were presented in 2013 to Dave Broeker and Johnny Mayo. With more detailed program content and a resolution made by the VDHA Board the next set of medals were presented at the 2016 Reunion's awards banquet to Russell Walters, Al Dodds, and a third to Frank Gavalton. You can see their nomination text in the December 2016 issue of Dogman on page 5. Nominees for 2018 were Vernon Anderson, Karl Goss and Perry Money. You can see their nomination text on our website at this location: <http://www.vdha.us/content29520.html>

VDHA nomination criteria:

1. Nominees should be current members of the VDHA and meet at least one or more of the following:
2. The Warrior's Medal is awarded for valor, for an action or actions in Vietnam or Thailand that were never recognized by the Military, or

3. Outstanding service to the VDHA, or
4. Outstanding and consistent or ongoing service to or for deployed troops or veterans, or
5. Outstanding and consistent or ongoing service to or for Military Working Dogs past or present.

Nomination Review Committee members for 2020 are:

* VDHA President John Harvey — Marines, Scout Dogs, Vietnam

* Johnny Mayo — Army, 39th Infantry Platoon, Scout Dogs (Bien Hoa), Vietnam

* John Homa — Air Force, 388 SPS K-9 Korat & 635 SPS K-9 U-Tapao Sentry Dogs, Thailand

* Tim Hennessey — Navy, Sentry Dogs, Vietnam

* Janet Mathews — Daughter of USAF Master Sgt. Alvin W. "Sarge" Matthews.

Nominations should be received by the committee no later than June 1, 2020 to be evaluated in time for the Reunion. There will be up to a maximum of two VDHA recipients each reunion year unless the committee finds and approves by majority vote an exceptional circumstance for a third medal.

Each nomination must contain the name of the nominee, dates of service in Vietnam or Thailand, and unit(s) name and number. It must contain the name of the VDHA member making the nomination and contact information. It must identify for which one or more of the nomination criteria listed (numbers 1 through 5) the VDHA member is being nominated.

The nomination text itself should have as much written information as possible (not just "so and so is a great person, I know him well"), describing the event(s) or circumstances or activity past or present for which the VDHA member is being nominated. See example nomination text in the December 2016 issue of Dogman on page 5. The nomination should contain the Who, What, Why, Where, When, and How to the best of the nominator's knowledge.

Those VDHA members wishing to nominate a fellow member for the upcoming reunion in Washington DC, should send it to VDHA President John Harvey at jrhcpa@hhcpas.com or John Homa at jmhoma@earthlink.net by June 1 of this year.

If you do not have e-mail, please send a nomination by letter to President John Harvey, 3000 Holiday Drive, Unit 1101, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316.



2019 VDHA DEATHS (34)

Last Updated: 3/1/2020

Starting in 2013, and continuing every year thereafter, it is the intent of the VDHA to publish a list on the VDHA website, of names, unit(s), & dates of death that were reported during the previous year. This list will also be published in the first *Dogman* issue of the following year.

A second list will be created, combining all names on all lists, and sorted alphabetically by last name.

Any name not found previously in our database will be added posthumously, in an effort to honor and track the status of our K-9 brothers.

Anyone reporting a death or modification should contact the Webmaster by e-mailing info to deaths@vdha.us.

NAME	UNIT(s)	Date of Death
1-Baker, Bob	3rd SPS	08/20/19
2-Ball, Steve	38th IPSD	04/15/10
3-Ballard, Walter	35th APS	04/16/19
4-Brummett, Richard E.	212th MP Co.	06/20/15
5-Burchfield, Roy	3rd SPS	Unk
6-Burkholder, Ron	377th SPS	07/18/19
7-Chandler, Doyle	212th MP Co.	04/04/19
8-Clark, Robert W.	981st MP Co.	12/18/18
9-Cottrell, Ed	632nd SPS	01/04/19
10-Dabbs, Marshall Allen	37th SPS	02/28/19
11-Glunz, Charles J.	981st MP Co.	01/11/19
12-Hamblin, Ralph	981st MP Co.	04/15/03
13-Hannon, Jim	635th SPS	07/19/19
14-Hurston, Gregory Lee	212th MP Co.	030715
15-Jewett, Gordon 'Gordie'	12th SPS	1985
16-Litton, Robert Walter	212th MP Co.	04/28/19
17-Monsour, David G.	212th MP Co.	01/14/15
18-Nutter, Raymond L.	377th SPS	08/14/18
19-Oldknow, Richard D.	8th SPS	07/21/19
20-Patton, Joel	595th MP Co.	10/29/18
21-Pomeroy, Everett "Gary"	12th SPS	04/01/19
22-Reck, Bernard Francis	377th SPS	02/01/19
23-Regnier, Mike	212th MP Co.	11/09/10
24-Rice, Mike	42nd IPSD	01/11/19
25-Rivet, Paul J.	981st MP Co.	Unk
26-Sharp, Reggie	3rd SPS	Unk
27-Sorenson, Ed	58th IPSD	07/26/18
28-Strano, Sam	12th SPS	1985
29-Trautman, Robert P.	981st MP Co.	08/03/19
30-Umstead, Jesse	212th MP Co.	2001
31-Waldron, James "Wally"	981st MP Co.	07/28/18
32-Williams, Rick	212th, 595th, 981st MP Co.	2015
33-Wimberly, Herman C.	981st MP	02/16/18
34-Wolford, Michael	35th SPS	12/07/19

2020 Reunion Pin Contest



The deadline for a design consideration is May 1, 2020.

You can compete in designing a pin for this year's VDHA Reunion in Washington, DC. The VDHA has formed a Reunion Pin Design Committee consisting of four member judges: Bill Cummings (Chairman Non-Voting), Craig Lord (Voting), Norm Ream (Voting), and Lynn Mastin (Voting).

An entry does not need to be a "professionally" completed design for consideration. If a somewhat primitive concept is uniquely different and is selected as the winner, we have made arrangements for a professional firm to convert it into a finished design.

Past winning pin designs (pictured) have incorporated the reunion location and location related art, the year and "VDHA Reunion."

For on-line entries via e-mail please use acceptable formats, i.e. JPG, PDF, Word, or GIF. Send on-line entries to k9brutus@comcast.net Please put "VDHA Pin Contest" in the subject line so your entry does not go to spam. Make sure you let us know who you are, so we are not dependent on your e-mail address only. We will assign a contestant number for voting.

For snail mail entries, please send to VDHA Pin Contest, Bill Cummings, 10172 N. Tall Cotton Drive, Marana, AZ 85653. Entries will be electronically scanned and sent to the judges. Again, make sure you include your name with your entry. **Please submit your design ASAP, but they must be received No Later Than May 1, 2020.**

The competition is restricted to VDHA members of any type who are in "good standing" only. We have not yet determined the prizes for the winner. Good Luck to all!

The deadline for a design to be considered is May 1, 2020. The winning entry will be announced at the reunion. A photo of the winning entry will be featured in the September 2020 edition of *Dogman*.

If possible, please submit your entries ASAP. Due to the voting, selection, manufacturing process and any required changes, time is very important, and we want this to be a great Reunion Pin contest.

Memory of a Scout Dog Wounded in Action

By Steve Lemish

47th & 48th Scout Dog Platoons

This is the second installment of the story of Duke 96M0, how he was wounded and how he was cared for by a varied group of individuals from different outfits within the Army and Air Force.

You know the Army, and how the smallest guy in the platoon seems to end up with the M60 machine gun? That was Duke and I. He was big and I was... well, not so big. But it turned out to be the best match ever made.

Duke was a silly-looking dog that loved to play. He galloped around and wagged his over-sized tail at our first meeting. He seemed to have a surfer's attitude, "no worries, I got this." At first I wondered whether he would be up for the task at hand. I worried he would not be serious in training and or worse, in the bush.

I would soon learn differently. He was obedient to a fault. While he was quite adept at hand signals for out in the bush, it seemed he had a good command of the English language also in the rear. He enjoyed doing precisely what he was told immediately. Although he had the disposition of a child while off-duty, he was all business once that halter went on. It was like night and day.

He was not a dog-fighter either, which was nice for me because I never had to find out whether he could drag me into a dog fight. He loved people too, especially grunts, although he did not like Vietnamese people at all. He was trained not to bark, but he had a low, very menacing growl and giant teeth which would seem to get even bigger in his mouth around Vietnamese people.

Those abnormally huge, pointed ears worked well too. Most of his alerts involved his ears, and because they were so big, I could see them easily. His tail, like his ears, was also huge and could not be missed while he was walking ahead of me. When he alerted, it went straight up in the air and stayed still. As long as I could see him, he was one of the most effective scout dogs out there, and one of the easiest to read.

The 47th Scout Dog Platoon worked out of Phu Bai when I was there. It had been located at LZ Sally about 30 miles Northwest of the imperial capital of Hue. We operated mostly in the dense jungle along trails. Duke and I would walk point for 101st Airborne grunt units.

Our missions were supposed to be limited to 3-5 days. They sometimes went longer, however, depending on the weather and the terrain. We were transported by Huey helicopters, so they had to have a place to land.



Duke 96M0 in the field at a clearing while stopped for the night. Look at the size of those ears.

About the first week of May, a high-ranking enemy soldier was captured with a map with red dots on it. Each of the red dots represented a big cache or small base. Some were weapon caches and at least one was an underground hospital. The brass decided to send scout dog teams with each of the units assigned to investigate the red dots. The 47th sent several of the scout dog teams. We sent one team out the first day. Three teams, including Duke and I went out the second day. We packed up our gear, dog food and ammo.

Duke loved to ride in helicopters. He was always excited and I never had to tell him to jump up into one. It was a pretty normal transport, Duke and I were being taken out to the field along with the supplies, food, ammo, mail, etc. Thankfully, we did not hit a hot LZ (landing zone where the Huey is taking enemy fire). Something was different though, with the grunts. They seemed more serious, perhaps more on edge than

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Sixth Graders Raise Money to Honor War Dogs

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Vernon Nazarene University. The German Shepherd is now OURS to claim and name.

Since Ed Reeves comes to speak at our school each year, our sixth grade class has decided to name the dog Prince 986A, in honor of his scout dog. The artist has even agreed to come and paint the ear tattoo number inside the dog's ear!

After weeks turned to months and months turned to a year, the beautiful 'Dog Fountain' in our city, Mount Vernon has been finished.

We are so proud to have been involved in this project and we boast that this is our fountain. We share it with the many well-deserving dog handlers, those who are living and those many brave soldiers who have already passed over the rainbow bridge.



The fountain in progress in Mount Vernon, Ohio, with Prince 986A looking on with his new friends.



Trudy Debolt and Ed Reeves with Prince.

DOGMAN

DOGMAN is published quarterly by the Vietnam Dog Handler Association, Inc. Members and their families are encouraged to submit articles, letters, photos, etc.

Letters and stories are subject to editing. Email all submissions to Dogman@VDHA.us or mail to Steve Lemish, Dogman Editor, 152 W. Park Avenue, Suite 150, El Cajon, CA 92020 (include a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want them returned).

VDHA is a nonprofit corporation exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c) 19(a). Contributions are tax deductible. IRS tax ID number #33-0690480.

Memory of a Scout Dog Wounded in Action

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normal. I wondered what they knew that I did not. They were still very glad to see us; they always were. I had been in country about five months now, no longer an FNG and I recognized one or two of the guys. I spoke with the first sergeant and a captain for a bit, and after everyone got re-supplied we headed out toward the red dot on the map with Duke on point. A corporal was walking my slack and I could tell he had been out there for awhile too.

Duke was doing his job just the way he was trained. He was working his way up the trail. He was looking around and smelling the air and looking back to make sure I could see him. Although I knew he was working, I'm sure he looked silly, even care-free to the casual observer. He had a way of walking, almost effortlessly, which looked like he was just taking an afternoon stroll.

It was hot and muggy and one other thing was happening that I hated. At times the trail would turn more than normal and I would lose sight of Duke ahead of me. He was trained to stay in my sight, but on trails like this, with the thick bush lining the trail and the sharper curves, I could lose sight of him. That was no good at all.

When I lost sight of Duke, we were all in harms way. I could not communicate with him or he with me. I could not tell if he heard or smelled something. There would be no way to identify an upcoming ambush or booby trap. I had to call him back several times with hand signals and tell him he had to stay in my sight. Each time he seemed to understand, but after awhile I would lose him again. I almost told the slack man to

bring up the sergeant so I could tell him this was not a good place for a scout dog. But I didn't. I hoped the trail would straighten out; they generally do. We were trained not to work in thick brush without a trail. It didn't do anyone any good to have a scout dog you could not see.

Duke was also trained as an off-leash scout dog. We had long leashes we could use, but in the jungle they would generally get tangled up or make other problems which would interfere with the scout dog's ability to do his job.

It kept on getting more muggy and more hot. We stopped maybe three or four times in the morning and set back out in the afternoon. By now, it was really hot and muggy. Thankfully, the wind picked up too and it cooled us as we walked up the jungle trail. The trail had straightened out a little as expected, but there were still bends in it. About two hours after starting in the afternoon, there was a bend in the trail and Duke did not stop and wait for me. He went around the bend and out of sight. Suddenly, I heard a huge explosion and we all got down, waiting to see if there would be small arms fire to go with it.

Then we heard the awful cries of Duke, hurt, down the trail, out of my sight. The cries only lasted a few seconds, then there was silence. A few seconds later, we heard a soft whimpering. Being both relieved and afraid for Duke, I crouched up and signaled to the slack man that I was going to check him out. When our eyes met, he could see I was not asking, and he just motioned with his eyes that it was ok. The whimpering stopped.

Continued in the next issue.

Current VDHA Officers

President:	John R. Harvey	3000 Holiday Dr., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316	860-796-7813
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V.P. Units:	Vacant		
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*The deadline
for new
articles, photos,
letters, etc. is
May 23 for the
June issue.*

Sgt Alan Sturdy: A Canadian in the 41st & 49th Scout Dog Platoons

Submitted By James Baldwin and Rory Cory (The Military Museums (Calgary), Alberta Canada) with assistance from Alan Sturdy's sister Laurie Slater.

From September 2018 to January 2019, The Military Museums (Calgary) presented a temporary exhibit titled "Tour of Duty: Canadians In The Vietnam War." This showing was very well attended by the public and was one of the most successful exhibits the museum has created. One of the displays featured scout dog handler Sgt. Alan Sturdy, who was killed in 1967 and is buried in Calgary, Alberta beside his parents. The following is written to acknowledge the service and memory of Alan, his fellow Vietnam Dog Handlers, and their K9s.

Early Background

Alan was born in Montreal, Quebec. His father was a doctor and the family moved to a variety of locations in Canada and the United States. Alan went to elementary and junior high school in Calgary but the family then moved to Redwood City, California for a number of years. After the family moved back to Calgary, Alan returned to Redwood City area on his own and attended two high schools there.

After high school graduation, Alan joined the United States Army in February 1966. He trained at Ft. Ord, California and was selected as a "distinguished trainee" of his company. He then volunteered for training in administration, diving school, airborne, and scout dog training.

His scout dog training was at Ft. Benning, Georgia from 31 October 1966 to 23 January 1967 with the 49th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog). At this time, he referred to working with dogs named Fritz, Barron, and Benno.

Deploying To Vietnam

Alan began his Vietnam tour on 27 February 1967. He was assigned to the 49th Scout Dog Platoon and was located near the "Iron Triangle." In March, he switched from his dog Benno and began working with a new dog called Nero. Much of this time was working in the field in the delta area and Alan wrote how Nero and he were becoming very close. Nero was protective of him and they slept together with the dog tied to him at night. At one point he was out in the field for forty-five days straight with two days break. Always restless, Alan consistently volunteered for patrols as he thought it made the time pass quicker and he "wanted to do his share". From his letters home, it was evident that Sgt. Alan Sturdy was similar to other scout dog handlers who loved their dogs and they had formed a unique partnership together.

In May, he was assigned to the 41st Scout Dog Platoon in the 1st Infantry Division (Big Red One). He found this unit much more organized in that they had cement kennels and were setting up pre-fab billets. Dogs were out in the field for two weeks and then came in for rest and retraining. In June, he was made a squad leader.

In one letter, he referred to an earlier event where he and nine others were surrounded by the enemy at night. They were taking casualties and he went for help with the result that the group was rescued. He provided little detail about this event other than he was recommended for a Bronze Star. He indicated the medal was not important to him and he viewed his own actions "as it was something that had to be done." There is no evidence that he ever received a medal for this action.

On 2 July 1967 Alan was on a reconnaissance patrol north of Phuoc Vinh (Binh Duong Province) with Nero. He had volunteered to take the patrol to work with a new scout dog handler (Paul Blackwell). After Nero became entangled in a booby trap wire, Alan tried to free him but the dog's struggles resulted in an explosion that killed Alan. Nero apparently survived the explosion. Alan would be awarded a Bronze Star with "V" device for his actions on that day.

A portion of his citation reads "Suddenly the scout dog became entangled in the heavy underbrush. When Sgt. Sturdy moved forward to free the animal, he discovered the dog had been caught in the wire from an insurgent booby trap. Sgt. Sturdy instantly shouted a warning to his comrades and then, with complete disregard for his personal safety, began to work the wire away from the dog. The animal's struggles, however, detonated the Viet Cong booby trap and Sgt. Sturdy was

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Checking \$37,585.72

Savings 5,077.60

TOTAL \$42,663.32

Pre-interest to the DC reunion was 50 total (members/spouses/guests). As of 2/28/2020 - 23 total (members/spouses/guests) have registered.

Randy Kimler stated Camp Sturdy was the rear area where all 41st dog handlers and dogs stayed when not on a mission. It was located in a French rubber tree plantation next to the village of Bencat and was on Highway 13 about 40 miles Northwest of Saigon.