



DOGMAN

A Brotherhood of All Combat Veteran Dog Handlers



VIETNAM DOG HANDLER ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 26 - NUMBER 2 - JUNE 2019

Member Tours Military Working Dogs at Andrews

*By Bob Dunn, Unit Director,
212th MP Co. Sentry Dogs*

My wife and I had the privilege and honor to tour the kennels of the Military Working Dogs at Joint Base Andrews just outside of Washington, D.C. Thanks to the generosity of David Ortega, Kennel Trainer, we were also treated to a demonstration and training session.



We met David at the Visitors Center where we were processed in with a background check, photos and fingerprints. David informed us that he has been in the Air Force for nine years. He has been a dog handler for the past three years. In September, he will be heading to Lackland Air Force Base to be a working dog trainer.

Then it was on to the kennels, on the other side of the base. Enroute to the kennels, we passed Air Force One, the presidential plane. Once there, we were introduced to the dog handlers. Back when I was in the

Army, Air Force police wore AP brassards. They now wear SF patches on their sleeves. David said that the kennels at Andrews were the largest "working" kennels in the United States. They are equipped to handle 33 dogs, but due to a recent death of one of their dogs, as well as a couple of retirements, the capacity was down to 28 dogs.

Dutch and German Shepherds along with Belgian Malinois are used as working dogs at Andrews. There are three types of working dogs; narcotics, explosives detection and patrol dogs. Many of the dogs are only trained in one of the specialties, though some are trained in both narcotics and explosives. Sentry dogs have been replaced by Patrol dogs.

Patrol dogs are trained very differently than the Sentry dogs of old. Because they now work in close proximity to civilians as well as other soldiers, they need to be comfortable and well behaved when in groups. They are still aggressive, but only on command by their handler.



David gave us a demonstration outside the kennels in the search and apprehension of a suspect, along with the taking down of a suspect who resisted arrest. It sure brought back memories of my time many decades ago in Okinawa.

Then it was on to another part of the base where explosives were buried and the dogs began their daily training of searching out IEDs. They began with the clearing of a "danger crossing," or intersection, walking side to side, with their nose to the ground, at the end of a thirty foot leash. Then it was on to a large field to uncover more explosive devices.



These dogs are amazing as once they locate the device, they sit, staring either at their handler, or at the ground where the device was planted, waiting for their handler to approach.

This is an elite group of men and women that serve at Joint Base Andrews. They work twelve hour shifts. Four of the twelve hours is patrolling the base on foot with their

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

By John R. Harvey
VDHA President

It is with great excitement that I can announce that your leadership has listened. While in San Diego, the board received numerous recommendations that we consider Washington D.C. as the site of our 2020 reunion. In order to keep the costs within the budget of many of our members we needed to move the dates from the middle of October to the end of August. We are in the process of completing our contract with Double Tree in Crystal City. Our last reunion in Washington was the year 2000. It followed the wonderful dedication of the War Dog Memorial in Riverside, California the previous February. It was my first introduction to the VDHA and was a memorable experience. I do not recall the actual number of attendees but it was in the several hundred. I encourage everyone to reach out to Bob Palochik and advise him if you intend to attend. We are trying to schedule our tours and bus requirements around an early showing of interest. (See the next page for details.)

It has been several years since I last made a pilgrimage to the Wall. I used to visit there on a regular basis. My first trip was in 1982. I recall dragging out my old jungle boots, borrowing a pair of jungle fatigues from my long-time friend Bob Stockman, and putting on my old bush hat that had been washed so many times it had shrunk and looked more like a yarmulke. I marched in my first parade alongside hundreds of other veterans from all branches of the service that had traveled to our nation's capital in order to show respect for those who had made the ultimate sacrifice, and search for an inner healing that had eluded us for so long. I can recall one afternoon leaning against a tree with my photo album in my hand, deep in thought about events long past. A young lady sheepishly approached me and asked if she could take my picture. As tears rolled down my cheeks she took her picture, apologized for interrupting me, and thanked me for my service. It was a meaningful event on my road back from the war.

Among my many subsequent trips the most memorable was having the privilege of standing in the audience about 20 feet from President Reagan on November 11, 1988. He delivered the following message:

"We are gathered today to remember those who served, those who fought, and those still missing, and those who gave their full measure of devotion to our country. ... Today, Veterans Day, as we do every year, we take that moment to embrace the gentle heroes of Vietnam, and all of our wars. We remember those who

were called upon to give all a person can give. And we remember those who were prepared to make that sacrifice if it were demanded of them in the line of duty.

I am not speaking provocatively here. Unlike other wars of this century, of course there were deep divisions about the wisdom and rightness of the Vietnam War. Both sides spoke with honesty, and fervor. What more can we ask in our democracy. And yet after more than a decade of desperate boat people and the killing fields of Cambodia, after all that has happened in an unhappy part of the world, who can doubt that the cause for which our men fought was "Just." It was, after all, no matter however imperfectly pursued, the Cause of Freedom. They showed uncommon courage in its service. Perhaps at this late date we can all agree that we have learned one lesson. That young Americans must never again be sent to fight and die unless we are prepared to let them win."

He went on to talk about a lesson of living love learned from Vietnam Veterans; love of family, love of buddies, and love of their country.

Thank you, board of directors and fellow members of the VDHA for allowing me to take this trip down memory lane. I would encourage everyone to visit with us, the sacred ground at the wall, build new loving relationships and create new memories that we can carry with ourselves to our final resting places.



2020 VDHA REUNION UPDATE WASHINGTON DC

THIS INFORMATION IS
ALSO AVAILABLE ON THE
WEB SITE

The 2020 VDHA reunion will be held:
AUGUST 27, 28, 29, 2020

DOUBLETREE BY HILTON
300 ARMY NAVY DRIVE, ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22202

WITHOUT ANY FIRM COMMITMENT(s) IN ANY WAY, the VDHA needs to gather some tentative information about the numbers of members/spouse(s)/friend(s) who would be interested in attending. This is a way for us to firm up numbers needed to proceed with blocking rooms, banquet information, tour, etc.

Since this reunion will be held at a hotel directly across the Potomac River from the Nation's Capital, the closest hotel in Virginia to Washington DC, we are anticipating that a large number of our members may want to attend and we would like to be as prepared as possible for the turn out anticipated.

THE BASIC INFORMATION IS AS FOLLOWS:

Room(s): Standard Guest Room / 2 Double Beds - \$124/night includes tax
(DOES NOT INCLUDE BREAKFAST) Please be advised reservations cannot yet be made.

- Complimentary Shuttle Service: 6am-11pm daily from Reagan National Airport (every 15 mins. and the Pentagon City Metro Station (every 30 mins.))
- Dinner Buffet: \$69/pp
- Copy the following link into your browser to view more information on the hotel
<http://alturl.com/r6iwb>

TOUR INFORMATION

- Bus Tour - \$25-\$30/pp (pricing depends on later decision to have the tour 3 or 4 hours respectively) Touring Washington DC memorials with a special stop at the Vietnam Memorial to lay a wreath from the Vietnam Dog Handler Association

At this time, we do not need any firm commitment, we just want to get a feel for the numbers to expect. If, at this time you have a real interest in attending the 2020 reunion, please shoot an email to bobpalochik@vdha.us. Include the number rooms needed, the number of persons you believe will take part in the dinner, and the number of persons who would be interested in taking the tour.



WE APPRECIATE YOUR HELP IN THIS MATTER
VDHA OFFICERS



Albert and Johnny; a Generational Tale

While we all know the joy of “going back to the world,” we also know the heartbreak of leaving our best friend and protector behind. This is a multi-part series written for us by a more-recent dog handler whose story ends a bit ... differently. This is the last part of his story. In the previous segment, Albert finally got to adopt his Marine Corps partner, Johnny. On New Year’s Eve, the neighbors set off some fireworks and Johnny reacted by crashing into the glass door at full speed.

By Albert Johnson

He collapsed on the floor and my wife went to help him up. He again tried to bite her in his fit of disoriented rage. She dodged his teeth and picked him up by the scruff of his neck and carried him to the bedroom where I laid trying to sleep. I said, “what the hell is going on,” still half-asleep. She said, “here, take your damn dog,” as she threw him on the bed with me. I tucked him under my arm and cuddled him tight just like we use to while we were deployed. He calmed down and next thing I knew were both snoring like bears.

Shortly after this episode, we adopted another military working dog named Moira. She was a Combat Tracker Dog and my wife had worked with her. She was another “aggressive” dog that came with a bunch of stipulations as well. The only reason we got to adopt her was because we had no kids and we were both seasoned handlers in the art of troubled dogs. Moira adored Johnny and he loved having her around. She was a few years younger and was super gentle with Johnny when they played.

The only part Johnny didn’t like was that he couldn’t have his favorite retirement toy when Moira was around because she would destroy them in a heartbeat. His favorite retirement toy was a stuffed yellow duck with a squeaker inside. It was an inexpensive toy, but he picked it out himself after an event we did to support the Feed the Dawgs organization.

Johnny represented the military working dog community very well. So we went to a pet store and the ducks were on the bottom shelf. So he grabbed it and tried to hide it from me. It was too funny not to buy it for him. We bought him two of the ducks, thinking he would ruin one for sure. Long story short, one was ruined, but not by him and he kept the duck till the end. A few days before we put him down we took a video of him lying on the couch, rolling around and playing with the duck.

In the end, Johnny had congestive heart failure, arthritis and he also suffered from seizures and kidney failure. It was a hard decision, but we decided it was time to end his suffering and put him down. He is forever with me and I know without a doubt that he is waiting for me on the other side.

I am blessed to have been able to retire my hero and spend his last few years at camp couch enjoying his time with his toys, food, and his adopted brother and sister. It is through speaking about him, telling the stories and educating people on how amazing these military working dogs are that I keep the memory and spirit of SSD Johnny F728 alive. Thank you for this opportunity to share a small portion of him with you.

It is because of the Vietnam-era dog handlers like yourself that make people realize our partners aren’t equipment. They are our heroes, our lifeline, our purpose and a true force multiplier and they need a retirement. They should be treated with respect and not destroyed when they are no longer useful to us. If it wasn’t for the fight you guys gave I would not have had the opportunity to give Johnny the life he deserved. I send a heartfelt thank you to all of you and thank you for your service and your continued support of the military working dog community.

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.

TRACKER REPORT



By John Dupla

It is just a few weeks before this year's reunion in Rapid City, SD. Getting ready for it has brought back many memories of my time in Vietnam serving as a tracker. For one, this year's reunion is being hosted by the family of Doug Enders that passed away last December. I served with Doug on the 1st Cavalry Division tracker team. He was Bruce's handler and I went on several missions with him as his "coverman."

I went to my photo album from Vietnam and found a couple of pictures of Doug. One of them showed him and I, along with Bruce, on a mission in the central highlands. I made copies of them and will present them to his family. FYI, I also did this for the family of Dennis Bueke, (KIA Oct, 1967). I had taken the last known picture of him and his brother Allen accepted it on his family's behalf. Allen sent me a note saying he is bringing his wife to the reunion to honor Dennis.

Looking through the album also opened a few other thoughts about my time in Vietnam. I saw a picture of me standing next to a couple of "entertainers" from a Bob Hope USO show. They were Melody Patterson, the blonde from the TV show F-Troop, and the singer Diane McBain, who appeared with Elvis Presley in one of his movies.

That was the closest I got to seeing a Bob Hope show in Vietnam. However, a local museum is hosting a Bob Hope tribute USO show honoring veterans as a fund raiser. I bought a table for the event and have invited my family to attend and share the experience with them. On a side note, I will also be joined by a Navy nurse that served off-shore of Vietnam on one of the hospital ships.

An interesting observation came out when telling others about attending a Bob Hope show. I found three Vietnam veteran friends of mine that actually saw his show. One of them is John Harvey, our VDHA prez. Wonder how many other trackers or VDHA members did?

Looking at that album also brought back other memories that makes me ask myself "was I actually there?" as it was so long ago. I try to think about the lighter side of it by re-telling the story about receiving a "care package" from home. My mother sent me one of those with a note attached saying she saw these items at a yard sale and thought how useful they would be for me in Vietnam. She bought them and sent it to me.

Looking forward to cookies, Jiffy-Pop popcorn, and other goodies, I anxiously opened the package. In it, it was so unexpected that I realized I never should have opened it in front of my friends. It seems my mother sent me a small package of C-rations along with the "cutest" can opener (P-38). Albeit it was the jelly and fruit, it was still C-rations. Thanks mom, miss you.

To all my fellow Vietnam veterans, hope you have some good memories. SEEK ON



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By Dave Broeker

If you received a BX Gift Certificate during the raffle at the 2018 VDHA Reunion in San Diego, please disregard the deadline of October 31st. These Gift Certificates, lost or not, are good for one year, but please use it at your earliest convenience!

SENTRY DOG FOXY: K.I.A. BY "FRIENDLY FIRE"

By George Cartter, VDHA Member

Checking the Vietnam Dog Handler Association website, I noticed that the 31st SPS K-9 unit at Tuy Hoa has few names I recognize from my time there (Oct. '67-Oct. '68). I did note recently that Toby Weir and I may have overlapped a bit in our tours and that he had handled Foxy.

A few years ago, someone in the VDHA was taking a census of military dogs killed and wounded. I wrote in with a brief story of Foxy's death. It hit me that a) I don't remember seeing a report of that K-9 casualty list and b) that maybe Toby Weir wasn't aware of what had happened to his former K-9 partner. It also hit me that maybe he didn't want to know. Contacting him by email, he called, and we talked for quite a while. He was interested in Foxy's story.

Not sure of the date, but it was around May, 1968, I think (hey, it's been over fifty years): the K-9 shift sergeant was slowly driving the perimeter of Tuy Hoa Air Base about midnight, with his headlights off, checking posts. When he was on the "paddy side" of the base, where the perimeter road ran along a paddy dyke, he saw two individuals moving from near the concertina wire across the road onto the base. He called this in. Each K-9 team had a walkie-talkie radio. Security dispatched a strike team to the location, which included about (I'm guessing) four or five acres of fallow rice paddy on the base. Four or five dog posts had the paddies on or adjacent to their patrol areas.

The strike team arrived: a driver, a "shotgun" guy with an M-16, a back-seat trooper manning a pole-mounted M-60, and, in this case, an officer of the watch, a captain. They were right on the edge of the paddy area. They radioed the K-9 shift sergeant and asked if all the K-9 teams were up out of the paddies (dry). They were told "yes". One of the strike team members yelled "Halt", "Dung Lai" "Chung Gee" (We had Korean White Horse Division troops in our operating area, so we did the tri-lingual halt protocol) and then "Halt" again. The second halt came just as the K-9 team of Stansfield (or Stanfield) was coming up out of the paddy. It was a dark night, and the wind was blowing towards the strike

team. Apparently, Stansfield didn't even hear the challenge.

Foxy was shot in the chest. Stansfield was shot in the hand as he reached for his flashlight. When he yelled, the strike team realized these were not Viet Cong infiltrators. The K-9 sergeant arrived and transported Foxy back to the kennels, maybe two miles away. She was still breathing. The veterinary was roused and tried to repair the wound. Because Foxy had lost quite a bit of blood, Toby, a dog who was not working that night, was brought in as a blood donor. I don't know who was there with the vet. Probably, the kennel attendant was out on post covering for Stansfield.

Toby was such an effective donor that he passed out from loss of blood. The vet stopped the transfusion, and Toby later recovered, but Foxy didn't make it.

I remember bits of this story from the radio traffic, but the lingering memory is walking into the kennels when we got off post in the morning and seeing Foxy lying on the veterinarian's steel table with the gunshot wound in her chest.

I've seen estimates of ten to fifteen percent for "friendly fire" as a source of casualties in Vietnam. I know my dog, King X363, also known as "Gramps" (he was old and grouchy), sent two fellow K-9 troops to the base hospital with severe dog bites, but I don't think those count as "friendly fire" – just accepted hazards of the trade. But real "friendly fire" casualties were just as painful or lethal as enemy contact, and even more damaging to morale. The captain who shot Foxy got a chewing out by a dog handler on an adjacent post on the spot, pushing the limits of an acceptable level of submission of grievances.

The other part of story I'm not sure about was whether the K-9 sergeant in the jeep had seen Stansfield and Foxy on the road? It was not likely at all, given the hour. So what became of the VC recon team that skulked onto the base? My best guess is they retreated back under the concertina wire when the other vehicles showed up and the shooting started. Maybe someone in Phu Lam village, adjacent the perimeter and the paddies, still tells this same story.

**THE VDHA 2020 REUNION WILL BE HELD AUGUST 27-29 IN WASHINGTON D.C.
IF YOU THINK YOU WILL ATTEND, DON'T FORGET TO SHOOT AN EMAIL OVER
TO BOB PALOCHIK (SEE PAGE 3 FOR DETAILS).**

Scout Dog Contacts Large NVA Base Camp

*By Sergeant First Class Robert B. Himrod
United States Army (Retired)*

On the 24th of April, 1968 I was a Scout Dog handler with the 49th Infantry Platoon, 199th Light Infantry Brigade. My dog, Cracker and I were assigned to support the 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry during a Search and Destroy operation in the jungles outside Tay Ninh. There was some intelligence information that a large NVA base camp was in the area and we were to search it out. The Tay Ninh area was a real bad contact spot. It was the southern part of the Ho Chi Minh trail that came out of Cambodia. It was Charlie's backyard.

The battalion manifested its personnel and started the air assault early in the morning. The gunships went in first and shot up the landing zone (LZ) and laid down a thick cloud of smoke. My dog and I came in with the first lifts. The door gunners were blasting the tree line with their M-60s as we came in and touched down. Springing from the helicopters, we ran to the edge of the LZ and set up a perimeter, as the rest of the battalion came in behind us. We had landed unopposed. When the whole battalion got down, we formed up and started our sweep into the jungle. "A" Company had the left flank, my dog and I had point with "B" Company in the middle, and "C" Company was on our right flank. "D" Company was in reserve bringing up the rear.

We maneuvered for hours through the heavy jungle. The three company point elements had to dodge natural terrain features, so we kept losing sight of one another. It was approximately 1400 hours when my dog Cracker gave me a faint alert to the front. I stopped and the company commander, Captain John South, and his radio operator Spec. 4 Glenn Pagano came to my position at point. I reported that I had faint contact to the front. Captain South directed my dog and I to continue. We did. About another 40 yards up this slow-raising trail, Cracker gave me a strong alert contact to the front. This was reported and we were again directed to continue forward.

Just up this trail, I found a dripping wet NVA shirt hanging over a bent tree branch. It was still bobbing up and down from someone having just thrown it over the branch. A small concealed camp fire was still burning and a ball of rice had just been dumped on the ground. The rice ball was just losing its shape from the container it had been in moments before. There was a small opening to a covered bunker. We were cautiously checking out the area, when all hell broke loose!

Automatic weapons and rifle fire raked our position and pieces of tree bark flew from the trees as the bullets tore into them. Loud bullet cracks sounded all about us. We jumped into the small bunker for cover and started returning rifle fire.

We couldn't see the NVA shooting the rain of bullets on us, but we fired in the direction from where it came. A few moments later the shooting subsided at us and became random. We started to move up this small knoll when a huge explosion went off to the front and above me. The NVA had set off a command detonated explosive in this large tree. It peppered the two soldiers in front of me with shrapnel. Because I was still on the backside of the tree, I didn't get hit with any fragments but felt the concussion. Wounded, they filtered back towards the rear of our line for medical treatment.

We set up a defensive line and directed our rifle fire up the rising knoll. It sounded like the whole battalion was in small arms contact. From the left flank came a thunderous amount of gunfire. "A" Company ran into

Continued on the next page . . .

War Dog Ink Displayed



Bob Mays, 35th SPS K9 Phan Rang 68-69, rolls with pride with his new K9 Ink.

Scout Dog Contacts Large NVA Base Camp

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the main body of this bunker complex, head on. The heavy volume of fire hit it's peak within five minutes and then went to sporadic exchanges. The afternoon wore on with fire fights all around.

My dog had done her job and given us early warning of the enemy. I relocated to where the medics had set up. They were a few hundred yards back from the main contact next to a large bomb crater. We used explosives to blow down some trees to widen the crater area so the Dust Offs could come in for our wounded. The pilots had to hover and come straight down through the trees. As they touched down they threw out some field stretchers. The first casualties were placed on the Dust Off and lifted out. The battalion had called in TAC air support and the ground was shaking as each bomb slammed into the jungle. The helicopter gun ships were making rocket and machine gun passes at targets, marked by our smoke. Their brass shell casings were raining down on us each pass they made.

My dog and I moved around and provided security to the wounded that were filtering back to the medics' assembly area. The dead were placed over in an area haphazardly covered with their ponchos. They couldn't be helped. Also with the dead were their body parts that had been severed; a leg from the knee down, a hand with a forearm and a foot with the boot still attached. The medics were feverishly working on the wounded. It was a hectic but organized sight. The battle wore on into the evening. All the critically wounded had been lifted out. We were now working on getting out the dead.

Radio word came from the last Dust Off that they were not going to come in for any more of our dead. They had been hit by small arms fire on their last lift. We still had two of our poncho-covered bodies laid out on the field stretchers. The light was fading fast. The artillery continued to pound the NVA position and the illumination rounds were casting strange shadows about the jungle through the trees.

A squad had come to our location to lead us to that night's defensive position. We moved out with our two dead and followed the squad's lead to the command post. The light from the artillery illumination flares continued to play tricks with our eyes. My mind was seeing things that were not there. Stumbling through the dark, we made it to that night's defensive position. My dog and I joined the command post. The bodies on the stretchers were placed on the ground. Their ponchos

had been tied over their heads to their waist. Their hands were tied together at their belt line, in front, with a casualty body tag. I set up, watered and fed my dog out of my over-turned helmet. I ate a C-ration meal and thought about the two soldiers under the ponchos next to me.

I laid out my poncho, tied my dogs leash to my foot and settled back clutching my Car-15. I heard someone on the radio calling in the paragraph and line numbers of those killed and wounded in that day's contact. As the artillery continued to provide illumination to the area, I fell exhausted off to sleep.

The next morning I awoke and the command post was busy getting the companies organized to return back to the contact area. I was advised that I was being lifted out and a fresh K-9 team was inbound as my replacement. I hurriedly got my gear together and started over to the landing zone where some others had assembled. I could hear the helicopter's blade chop coming in over the trees. I looked back at the two covered bodies and they were still there, dead. Purple blood had pooled about their bodies and their exposed hands had taken on that yellow wax look. I had strangely

... Continued on next page.

42nd IPSD Handlers Wait for Transport



Scout Dog handlers Robert Sproul and Russell Sours of the 42nd IPSD wait with their dogs Flare and Charlie Brown to go out to the field with the 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions.



... Large NVA Base Camp

... Continued from previous page.

thought that they would be ok in the morning. I didn't know them, but they were me. They were my innocence laying there in the hot morning sun.

The chopper set down and off jumped replacement rifleman and Sgt Bob Sinclair with his dog. I yelled over the chopper wash a brief report and told him to be careful. I passed him some extra ammo and got on board the chopper with the others. The aircraft powered up and strained to lift off, but its load was too heavy. The pilot yelled that one of us would have to stay behind. We all looked at one another and a soldier jumped out. We lifted off the LZ just next to the trees when the main rotor hit a tree limb with a loud smack. Luckily, we didn't crash. We continued to climb and headed back to the brigade main base. It had been a hard 24 hours.

Epilogue: Captain John Hershel South of Memphis, Tennessee; Specialist Fourth Class Michael John Cox of Detroit, Michigan; Private First Class Paul Baren Creighton of Memphis, Tennessee; Specialist Fourth Class Luis Antonio Ortiz-Perez of Ponce, Puerto Rico; Specialist Fourth Class Jay Dee Richter of Pasadena, California; Private First Class Terry William Shoot of Charleston, Illinois; Private First Class Jerry Bob Truitt of Novinger, Missouri; Specialist Fourth Class Ralph Voss of Dallas, Texas and Staff Sergeant John Michael Weatherford of Mesquite, Texas were all killed in this action. Their Honored names can be found on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. Thirty three other American soldiers were wounded. A sweep of the battle field confirmed a thirty-three NVA body count.

War Dog Mystery at Wall

This 'smaller' war dog was found at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall as reported by VDHA member and Wall volunteer Bob Dunn. No one knew who left it. Bob posted it on Facebook and an investigation followed. After determining the Wall panel where he was left, research by Jim Peters revealed the handler was Robert William Elliott. His dog was named Mark.

Additional research by both indicates Sgt Elliott was killed in action 8/9/70. He was from Woodbury, NJ. He was killed in Kia Quang Nam Province by hostile action and received multiple fragmentation wounds. His body was recovered. Sgt Elliott began his tour on 5/17/70. He had a different MOS before becoming a dog handler.



TREASURER'S REPORT

By Bob Palochik

Checking	\$31,982.21
Savings	5,075.60
Total	\$37,057.81

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Ernie Ayala

You see kids in middle and high school nowadays putting projects together like robots. They do drone experiments, computer projects and they communicate them using seven different social media venues. Very few of them dare to go into the past like the Vietnam War. We are pretty much forgotten. The dogs are not only forgotten, they are not even discovered by most young people. Where has history put us in the schools or were we deleted?

Two middle high school youths are using their best efforts to put a spotlight on the dogs and dog handlers of the military during Vietnam. Parker Williams and Devin Corrington from Lewisburg, Ohio have produced a social project and entered it into a state

competition that tells the story and plight of the military working dog during the Vietnam Conflict.

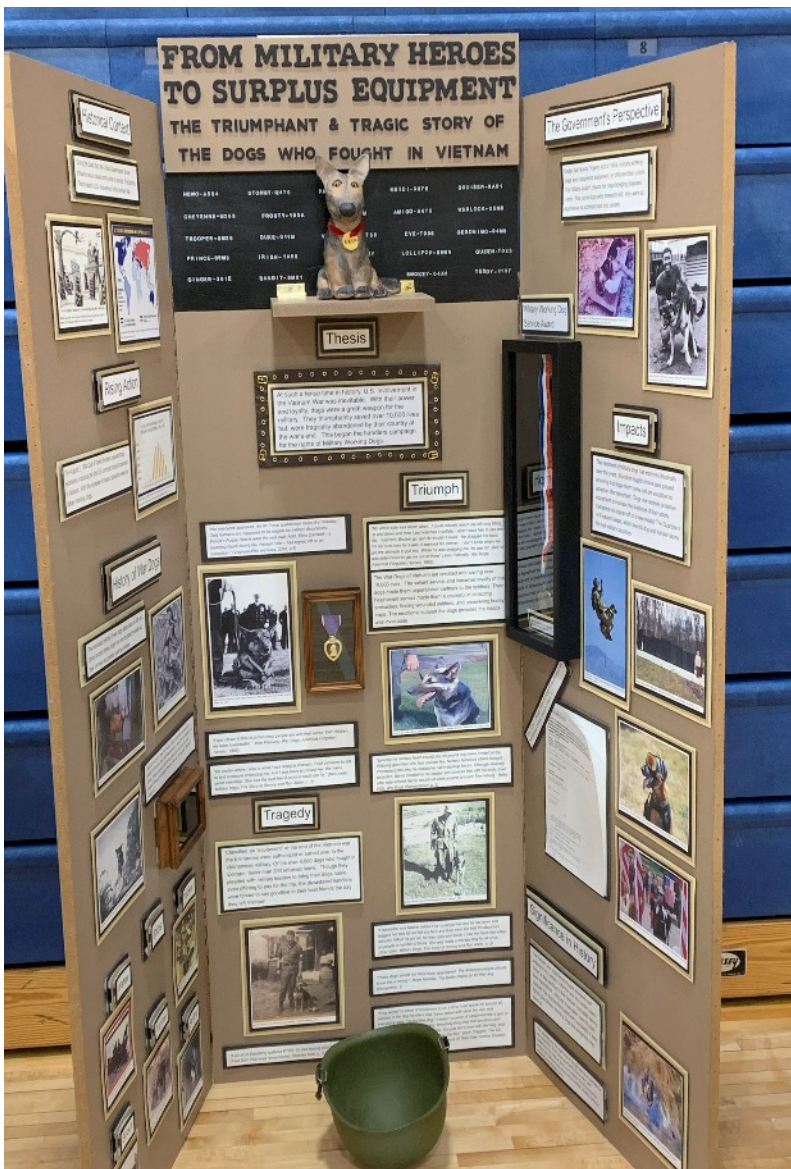
Their project was ignited when they learned Devin's grandfather adopted a retired military working dog and they wanted to know all about the dog and what he and other dogs like him did in the military. They wanted to know about the dogs who served during war time and what happened to them. Williams and Corrington said, "once we learned of the triumphs and tragedy of the dogs in Vietnam we wanted to learn more. They gathered information and first hand stories from me, Vernon Anderson, Bill Cummings and John Dupla, as well as other former dog handlers like Ron Aiello, John Meeks and John Burnham.

The boys proudly represented the Tri-County North Middle School and have placed number one the district competition. Now they will be going to the state finals for the big match against all comers.

They are so passionate about their project. The judges asked them what was the most difficult thing in assembling all the information together, they answered, "listening to the stories dog handlers came home with. That was hard. Some of the men choked up when telling the stories, some cried. Some had fond memories of playing with their dogs and the others who gave them a lot of love." Their hearts broke when they realized both dogs and their handlers had to proceed without that Hollywood ending. The end of the tour was over for both and they said their goodbyes knowing the dog wasn't coming home, ever.

From the mouths of babes, the saga of the Vietnam dogs and their handlers lives on in their project as a tragic, but legendary era of history. For Parker Williams and Devin Corrington, a little bit of us just rubbed off on a little bit of them.

Since this article was written, email from Stacy Williams stated Parker and Devin won first place at the Ohio State History Day competition and will be moving to the national competition in June at the University of Maryland.



Brotherhood and Reunion: A Story of Healing

This personal story recounts the lasting damage war can inflict. We all know brothers who, even though they lived to return from Vietnam, never made it all the way back to the World. For many it is a continuing process. In the first two parts of his story, Mike recounted leaving Vietnam after two serious head traumas. He got back to the states, had a very rocky welcome, and didn't know why he had huge gaps in his memories. After a long time, he found the VDHA website.

By Mike Hurder

For a year after seeing it, I sort of watched in the background. Of course, I wasn't one of them. I didn't even have a unit to refer to, just some vague memory and a hand receipt for the best friend I ever had. I was assigned to Ernie Ayala's 212th MPs for lack of any place else to go and I was grateful for that. I had hoped to find my brothers there. Nope! No one even listed something called a Patrol Dog. I thought, 'fade away...fade away...they'll forget you,' and I tried, but for Santi's sake, I pushed a little. Ultimately, the VDHA recognized us and made me the Unit Director and made Santi a member posthumously.

Before we were our own unit, I was grouching with anyone who would read my rant on the VDHA site, "why doesn't anyone remember us? There must be some record. Blah blah blah."

That's when this guy called Perry, another GD Marine no less, jumped into the fray and with a solemn, "Now, hold on there, Mr. Hurder...who are you and what's your problem with my VDHA?" Lol. Suffice to say, once he verified my bona fides as much as anyone could, Perry not only found the shoulder patch of our unit, he found my brother Donnie Lassiter in Rockingham, NC. I had a unit. I had a brother. I had a bunch of brothers. I cried on the phone with Perry, with Donnie, and with Donnie's lovely life-long companion and wife, Peggy. Hell, the phone was a mess.

Along with all those miracles, I was hoping for one more. I was hoping Donnie could verify, at least for me, what went on for those lost two weeks. Specifically, I wanted to know about the two other times I knocked my head; if they happened as I think I remember them.

Unfortunately, Donnie could not help. He has promised to go through what records he has, to see if there's any reference to the incidents, and his orders assigning him to the 34th IPSD, maybe I might be on them. We were all waiting for Spec4 promotions too. I

hope for any of those. I have been refused a Combat Infantry Badge (CIB) several times. After the reunion, it's the one thing I still want from that mess now. I hope there is something in his records I could use to verify my participation in at least one of the actions we saw. It's simply a matter of pride. The one thing a grunt wants is his CIB. I'm no different.

As far as the incidents themselves, Donnie only remembers the part he was involved in on 10 APR, which was the aftermath of what I'd been involved in earlier the same evening. Prince and I set the table. The bad guys targeted him and Bodie in retaliation later that night. Some innocents paid the price earlier, all for a crazy ARVN Captain who was determined to end the sapper issue once and for all. So, when he saw Prince alert and me telling him 'good boy', he blew the hell out of a small wooded area, half a klik North of the gate, not quite a jungle, where local peasants foraged, and kids played every day. I couldn't stop him, neither could his Top.

I was dismissed from the field for interfering. Before I could get off the field, his spotting rounds nearly blew me and the ARVN squad which was escorting me to kingdom come. Knock #2.

We were lucky to land in la-la land instead, but when I recovered, I suddenly wanted that Captain Linh's head for what he'd done to Prince. I'd never tasted hate before then. Sgt Lam, the Top, steered us to the woods instead so we could recon for casualties. Prince was crying from the smell before we even got close. They were all kids. I was met at the gate and given a ride to our compound where I was ordered to remain until further notice. I groomed Prince and cleaned my weapons at least three times waiting. Later that night, the enemy tried to kill Donnie walking mortars in on his guard position while he was begging for permission to engage or at least move his OP. Thankfully, Donnie had radio issues or something, and figured they must have told him to go ahead and move. So he did, about 50 feet...just before they blew the hell out of his last OP...then he engaged.

Very early the next morning, the OD, a major, came to the 34th and said, "this whole thing is a friendly-fire Vietnamese matter. Don't worry about it. It never happened." In shock, Donnie and I got well and truly obliterated because "it" never happened. Don't mean nuthin, man!

... Continued in the next issue.

35th SPS K9 Phan Rang Reunion

By Craig Lord

The 35th SPS K9 of Phan Rang to include 366th and 315th of Phan Rang will be holding a reunion in Virginia Beach, VA. October 3rd through 6th. Rates (\$89 + Tax) are good 3 days prior and 3 days after.

There is no registration fee and as usual we pay as we go. We will have dinner at 6 pm on Friday Oct 4th with entertainment to follow. If possible we will also have a Dolphin watching excursion on Sat morning. There will be a hospitality room so we can share memories and pictures.

Contact Bob Mays at parrotsrus@verizon.net or Craig Lord stripgate@gmail.com for more information. See additional details below.

Phan Rang 366th, 35th, 315th K9 Reunion Virginia Beach 2019

October 3-6th 2019

Reservation Information

Arrival Date: October 3, 2019 Departure Date: October, 6 2019

CHECK IN TIME IS 3PM AND CHECK OUT TIME AS 11AM

GUESTROOM RATES

Group rate for guestroom is \$89.00 per night for up to four to a room. The rate is subject to applicable taxes of 14% tax, plus \$2.00 per night lodging tax. The rate includes a full American breakfast buffet each morning. Meeting space is being held for the group as a hospitality room.

RESERVATION PROCEDURES AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Room fees will be paid by the individual attendee. Upon making the reservation the guest must identify themselves as being with the VDHA. **A deposit of the first night and taxes must be paid upon making the reservation.** Reservations must be cancelled 72 hours prior to arrival to receive a full refund of the deposit. Reservations will close on September 15th 2019. After such time rates are subject to availability. Make reservations using the following:

Best Western Plus Sandcastle Beachfront Hotel

1307 Atlantic Ave., Virginia Beach, VA. 23451 P:757-428-2828

Reservations: 1 (800) 528-1234 bestwestern.com

Note: No Smoking, No Pets, one parking pass per room.

Vietnam Dog Handler Assoc.
c/o Randy Kimler
2225 Merriman St.
Port Neches, TX 77651-4302

PRSRT
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit # 309
Pekin, IL
61554

Member Tours MWD at Andrews

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four legged partner. Their responsibilities include patrol, narcotics and explosive detection.

They may be assigned to the perimeter of the air field. They may be called to one of the gates to perform a narcotics search of a vehicle. They are also responsible for protecting and defending the President when he flies in and out of Andrews, where Air Force One is located. It is a large base, much like a medium size city.

One of the handlers told my wife and I that he prefers narcotics detection, as it gives him satisfaction to do actual police work. He said that you can't just search a vehicle for drugs, that you need probable cause. Walking around the outside of a vehicle with his dog, and the dog alerting, gives him PC to search the vehicle.

Again, I want to thank David Ortega for taking the time out of his schedule to show us around. It was an experience I will never forget.



Photos: Page 1, David Ortega, Kennel Trainer; Apprehension Training; IED Training. Above: Joint Base Andrews dogs and handlers.

