



DOGMAN

A Brotherhood of All Combat Veteran Dog Handlers



VIETNAM DOG HANDLER ASSOCIATION

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Wisconsin Holds K9 Veterans Day

By Ron Werneth

The 6th Annual Wisconsin K9 Veterans Day was held on March 8 this year. It honors all of our working and military dog teams; past, present and future. The veterans, both human and their canine partners, were celebrated for their service on behalf of all of us. Importantly, the day recognizes all K9 Teams including military, law enforcement, government and civilian (search/rescue).

This Wisconsin event was largely spear-headed by the hard work of Mabel Schumacher and her fellow members of the Kennel Club of Fort Atkinson. They and much of the local community were instrumental in the funding and creation of Ft. Atkinson's K9 Veterans Memorial. The memorial was dedicated in June 2017 and honors fallen Vietnam USMC scout dog handler LCpl. Terry Beck and his K9 Seato. They were killed on 20 December 1967 by a sniper in Thua Thien, Vietnam.



Some of the Vietnam K-9 Handlers who attended. Allen Mathews (47th IPSD) with Yanos, Rick Hong (47th IPSD), Ron Werneth, Jerry Greil (33rd IPSD), John Meeks (42nd IPSD) with Brutusz and more recent day USMC K-9 handler Cody Crangle and his former MWD, Flo.



Mabel Schumacher and Gary Wolfram at the memorial dedicated to Terry and his dog Seato.

This Wisconsin K9 Veterans Day was really all about working Dogmen (and women) Teams of every facet. I was honored to be chosen as the keynote speaker for the main ceremony held at the American Legion Post #166 in Ft. Atkinson. For me, the most wonderful part of this event was a public acknowledgement of these special veterans.

Remarkably, many of our Vietnam K9 handlers came from long distances just to attend. Allen Mathews (47th IPSD) travelled from Ohio with his retired MWD Yanos to participate. Another long-distance attendee was John Meeks (42nd IPSD) who is the U.S. War Dogs Chapter 3, Executive Director. Meeks and his retired MWD Brutusz came from Indiana. He set up his beautiful photo wall display that has images of our military dog team veterans from WWII to present.

Several other distinguished Vietnam Dogmen
Continued to Page 3 . . .

FROM THE PRESIDENT

By John R. Harvey
VDHA President

The search for something to be cheerful about.

First I need to apologize to everyone who works so hard to bring you a quality, informative *Dogman* each quarter. The delay in having this quarter's *Dogman* published is entirely my fault. As my drill instructors at Paris Island told us so many years ago, "excuses are like a..holes everybody has one." My excuses are so lame, that even I cringe.

Historically, when putting together my President's Letter, I have tried to send an uplifting message. I have tried to include tidbits that my brothers could relate to and maybe even have a chuckle. I, like many of you, have not seen a lot around me to be cheerful about.

Two weeks ago I spent 48 hours in bed with a fever, chills, headache, muscle aches. Yes, the thought of having COVID-19 went thru my mind. As it turned out, by the third day I was feeling fine. I have had two "negative" tests this past week, so all is good. But the experience does leave one to think about their mortality.

I don't need to talk about the actions that are tearing our country apart. Everyone has a television.

I do find it amazing that I went back 50 years and started thinking about the "good old days" in Vietnam. I have written about going to the Bob Hope Christmas Show in DaNang. I was also privileged to experience a number of USO shows.

Below is a picture taken on the beach in Quang Tri. She was definitely more interested in Prince than she was me. I can't count the number of times I would have a girlfriend tell me I was the only guy they knew who could find a beautiful blue-eyed blond in the middle of a war zone.

There was also a brotherhood that we all respected. Below is also a picture from camp Kaiser in Da Nang. Standing on my left is Raymond Johnson. He was the only member in my Fort Benning scout dog class to bring his dog to Vietnam. On my right is Duval (Gunny) Williams, also a member of my Fort Benning class. We all had a single purpose. Our mission was to keep as many young Marines alive as possible.

I guess that as I reflect on cheerful times gone by, I have fond memories that provide hope for the times to come.



Wisconsin Holds 6th Annual K9 Veterans Day

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attended and participated including: Jerry Greil (33rd IPSD), Rick Hong (47th IPSD), Larry Reynolds (43rd IPSD), Jerry Witt (34th IPSD) and Dennis Wittman (48th IPSD). Fallen USMC scout dog handler Terry Beck was remembered by his best friend Gary Wolfram. Modern day military Dogmen were represented by Cody Crangle (USMC, ret.) and his retired former MWD partner Flo, a beautiful black Lab. Lastly, I set up a display of original K9 veteran artifacts including uniforms and gear, which was well-suited for education purposes.

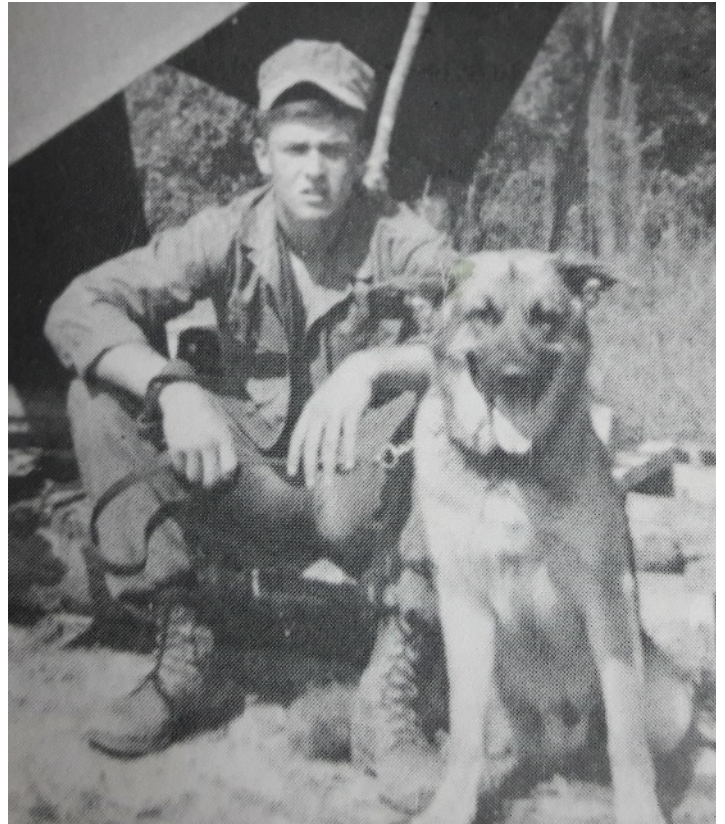
The event itself was done in two parts; the sit-down portion at the American Legion Post #166, and a wreath-laying service at the K9 Veterans Memorial (McCoy Park). A large part of the sit-down service was the acknowledgement of numerous K9 law enforcement and civilian search/rescue dog teams (both human and canine) in attendance. As mentioned earlier, former military veteran K9 handlers and retired MWDs were well-represented throughout the event.

Senator Steve Nass, who help secure the official designation of March 13 as Wisconsin K9 Veterans Day, spoke during the event as well. My personal presentation focused on the contributions our working dog teams have made for the past eight decades and the need to acknowledge their service. I also spoke about how my work as a historian was profoundly influenced by Vietnam Dogmen and Ellie, our family's German Shepherd.

The last part of Wisconsin's K9 Veterans Day ended with a wreath laying and short service at the K9 Veterans Memorial. This was a chance to remember LCpl. Terry Beck and his dog Seato along with all our K9 Teams. Gary Wolfram put the wreath around the neck of the German Shepherd statue to honor Terry, his best friend that made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam;



The color guard veteran flag bearers included local Wisconsin Vietnam scout dog handler Rick Hong.



Marine LCpl Terry Beck with scout dog Seato.

Remembering Terry Beck

One of the meaningful things that occurred at the event was the public remembrance of the ultimate sacrifice of United States Marine Corps Lance Corporal Terry Beck (scout dog handler) and his K-9 Seato. After meeting Gary Wolfram, Terry's best friend, we paid our respects to the fallen marine at his gravesite. I also spoke with Connie Beck Walt, Terry's sister, and his other close friend Jeff Blomsness.

The young K-9 handler started his tour on 10 October 1967. He and his dog Seato were both killed, possibly by a sniper, on 20 December 1967. They were KIA while on patrol with 3rd Recon Team, 12 km south of Phong Dien, Vietnam. The UTM grid reference is YD525232.

It is our hope to learn more about Terry's USMC days. If you or someone you know served with LCpl Beck, please contact me at rjwerneth@gmail.com or via *Dogman* Editor Steve Lemish. Thank you for your assistance in this important duty.

Memory of a Scout Dog Wounded in Action

By Steve Lemish

47th & 48th Scout Dog Platoons

This is the third 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. In the last issue, Duke was walking point when he went out of sight on a trail. There was a heavy blast and the yell and then whimpering of an injured scout dog. But then the whimpering stopped.

I went up the trail carefully but quickly, looking for Duke. He was not on the trail. Before getting out of his sight, I motioned for the slack man to come and help me find him, but to leave the rest of the platoon where they were. We finally found him a few yards off the trail. He was bleeding from multiple injuries to his torso and legs, but he was breathing. He looked at me like he was in trouble and he was trying not to make any sounds.

I tried to comfort him and whispered in his ear that he was going to be ok. I told him we needed to see how badly he was injured. Slowly, I turned him over carefully to look for wounds on his other side. The slack man, I wish I remembered his name, motioned for the medic to come up. Soon there were others there, including the captain. I had Duke's blood all over me and I heard the slack man assuring the captain and others I had not been injured also.

The medic applied bandages and wrapped them around the injuries as best he could. There were holes in his hindquarters and side but none had come out his other side. There was a small one on his leg near his joint. I kept petting Duke, telling him he was going to be fine, although with all the blood, I was hoping not to be wrong. Later, when it looked like we could control the bleeding, I became more concerned with the wound on his leg; scout dogs who couldn't walk didn't last too long.

The radioman came up and I heard someone call for a Medivac. They confirmed a scout dog had been injured. I looked up and around. The jungle was thick and there was no way a helicopter or Medivac could ever land anywhere near us. I was afraid they might not send someone for Duke. After some time, which seemed like more than an hour, there was more activity on the radio. I could not hear the words, but the guys got me up and dusted me off. They said a chopper was coming for Duke.

By this time, I knew it would be a jungle penetrator on a cable coming from the Medivac well above the tallest trees. I was afraid Duke could not be secured on the penetrator and could move and fall off, I told them I had to go with him. They said not to worry, that was the plan. Within a couple minutes, we could hear the Medivac in the distance. The platoon got in position. They knew the Medivac's noise would attract the enemy and give away our location, as if the booby trap didn't do that already. (It turned out to be a mortar round attached to a trip wire close to the ground.)

I stood and looked for the chopper, the sound of it was getting louder. There were three guys taking care of Duke with the medic; petting him and talking to him. He seemed happy. Seconds later we were told to move as a cable and attached penetrator descended through the trees. There were constant communications with the Medivac by radio as they lowered the cable from above.

The grunts knew to let it hit the ground before they touched it. Once on the ground, they stood it up and had me sit on it. My legs went over two of its three wings or prongs. Then they placed Duke on my lap and secured me with the attached strap. They said it was up to me to keep Duke calm and on my lap as he was not strapped on. They got the cable situated and I began to lift off the ground.

Lots of things were going through my mind at the time. I was thankful Duke was finally getting out of there to get some medical attention. As we went up into the air, I wondered why they couldn't go a little faster. I recalled how the enemy liked to take potshots at choppers. The stories of bounties on scout dogs and scout dog handler patches also came to mind. There was also the 101st patch, which the unit would not subdue like all the other Army division patches. But the most troubling thing was the swinging on the cable.

Everything was fine at the beginning. There was wind, but it was not blowing hard. About half way up through the trees, however, the wind picked up. I am not sure if it swung me and the cable around or perhaps it moved the chopper. The noise from the blades had more of the sharper clapping sounds like when they turn sharply or slow to land at an LZ. This was not good. I could tell I was swinging more and more. I recalled from my training, they are trained to cut the cable if there was too much swinging. It was a long way down.

Continued in the next issue.

My Buddies are Dying; Am I Ready to Go? Uniformly, Olive Drab

By Ernie Ayala,
VDHA Vice President

The VDHA board was discussing obituaries and the inevitable passing of our members. What can we do for them or for their families? Then I remembered one of my guys sent me something for our newsletter that opened my eyes to a very disturbing face. Something I should share with you all before it happens to you or one of your buddies.

Jerry Carlson, 981st MP Company 67-68 was a federal agent then a private investigator. Two years ago he discovered he had cancer and now it is in his bones at Stage Four. He has some advice that is worth a whole lot to most of us. Jerry said, "A friend of mine was planning to go on a trip with his wife. The day of leaving he ended up in the hospital and died. His daughter, Laurie soon discovered the pain and stress of figuring all the things one has to do when a loved one, a veteran, dies.



Laurie wrote a booklet called *The Next 48 Hours*. It is a step-by-step listing of what you should do to fill-out forms in the booklet so your family has all the information when you pass away or if you and your spouse pass away together, unexpectedly.

The booklet is \$10, but she says you can get it for \$8 online. Just

check out the website, and tell her Jerry Carlson referred you. She appreciates veterans. Her website is www.aglpub.com. Her phone number is 559-294-2142.

One of the important steps is to notify the VDHA and your buddies from your unit so your name is updated on our rolls and an obituary is included in our website or Facebook. Contact any officer listed on our rolls. Keep calling until one of them answers the phone numbers listed in this *Dogman* on page eight; preferably me, Dave Broeker, Steve Lemish or your unit director.

Look at the list of things you must do on page six of this issue. Print it and cut it out if you can, filling in the necessary information for those you love and leave behind.

By George Cartter

Being originally from a small salt-mining town outside of Death Valley, at the end of Air Police School in December, 1966, I was worried about serving in some frosty area like North Dakota or South Korea. A lot of us Californians freeze at fifty degrees. I had snagged an assignment to the Azores, about eight hundred miles off the coast of Portugal.

But then a K-9 recruiting sergeant came and gave the 120 of us in the A.P. class the opportunity to go to dog school. Walking around on asphalt guarding airplanes had no great appeal, so one other guy and I decided to go straight to sentry dog school at Lackland Air Force Base.

The K-9 sergeant took the two of us into a hallway and told us: A) the commitment meant we'd probably go to Vietnam within the year, and B) we were free to reconsider our decision. Being frost and asphalt averse, with the bonus of getting a dog to work with, we stuck to our decision. The other trooper was a Californian too. Reporting to sentry dog school, I hadn't realized that the program was an all-services facility.

Our class's lead instructor was Army E-6 Sgt. Dandridge. The class make up was eight airmen and three army troops. The class behind us was one Air Force E-4, and ten E-2 or E-3 Marines. It might have been a bit uncomfortable to have the airman in charge of ten way-too-gung-ho Marines, but the airman had already done a tour in Vietnam. I remember Sgt. Dandridge asking me who had the best dog in the class. I think he was expecting an answer like, "I DO, SERGEANT." He shook his head and rolled his eyes when I gave him an honest, analytical assessment of the teams.

At Tuy Hoa Air Base, all of our three dozen or so K-9 troops were Air Force. But, for about three weeks in '68, we had a Marine dog handler quartered in our hooch. He and his dog had been wounded. As we had a veterinarian and a small base hospital at Tuy Hoa, we were his recovery assignment. The Marine recovered faster than his dog so there was over a week where he was just hanging around waiting for his dog to heal. I don't think he minded some relatively quiet time with us Rear Echelon Muthas, but he also seemed to appreciate not having to throw on the helmet, the flak vest, the ammo belt and spend eight hours out on a rainy night on the perimeter.

Continued on Page 10 . . .

Fellow Veterans: Be Prepared. Use This Page

By Jerry Carlson,
981ST MP CO. 67-68

1. Decide on and contact a funeral home. They are first to be called. Phone # _____

If you have a VA Service Connected disability, check with the VA Hospital and if you meet requirements, make sure the funeral home knows about it. The funeral home prepares the death certificate and takes it to the doctor for "cause of death," then it is recorded in the county.

Make sure it shows the Primary or Secondary cause of death as "VA Service Connected Prostate Cancer from Vietnam Agent Orange, 67-68" (if true). This will ensure your spouse gets DIC of \$1,340/month support. The Doctor can edit the Death Certificate if necessary! I did it for a WWII veteran I took care of for 4 years.

2. Make a list of family, relatives, friends, church, etc. that need to be called next. Consider a friend or older grandchild to make the calls as the spouse will be emotionally spent. Possibly get a former coworker to call the others and get a cousin to call all the other cousins, etc.

3. Call The Department of Veteran Affairs/ Compensation and Death Notification at 800-827-1000. They will stop the disability check and send forms for your spouse.

4. Connect with your County Veterans Service Center and they will help you and your spouse.

5. Locate your VA Hospital DECEDENT OFFICE phone # _____ to report the death.

6. Get a Release of Information form from VA Hospital. Your spouse will need it to get information.

7. Have some copies of your DD 214 in the-3 ring binder you are making.

8. Do you have a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care? If not, get one. Contact an attorney or find the statutory forms for your state on line.

9. Call the Office of Personnel Management – Death Notification 888-767-6738 if you were a government employee with an annuity. Your Civil Service Retirement Annuity (CSA) # _____

10. Call the Social Security Administration to report death - 800-772-1213. They will set up an appointment for the spouse for their SSA benefits. Bring marriage and death certificates to the

appointment.

11. Call Medicare to report death 800-633-4227. Your Medicare # _____

12. Call your life insurance claims department(s):

Insurance Co. Name: _____

Policy No. _____

Insurance Claims Dept. # _____

Insurance Co. Name: _____

Policy No. _____

Insurance Claims Dept. # _____

13. File VA Form 40-10007, (pre-need) for Veterans burial in a National Cemetery, for you and your spouse. You will get a letter of eligibility confirming it.

14. Fill out VA Form 40-1330 for a headstone to be filed after death.

15. Contact your attorney if necessary. Do you need a trust to protect your assets from probate fees, taxes or attorneys fees for your children?

16. BE SURE TO HAVE A WILL. Some states (California) offer a free will on line, print it and fill it out, then have someone not related witness it with date and signature according to the law in your state. If you do it properly, it will be a legal will.

17. Bank accounts? Insurance policies? Stock? With who? Where is it? Policy Numbers, etc. I called everywhere to make sure I had the correct numbers for my wife to call when I pass on.

Be sure to note that most of these tasks must be completed before your death. When it's too late, it's too late.

Full Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Social Security # _____

Bank/Checking # _____

Bank/Savings Acct # _____

Bank/IRA Acct # _____

Other Bank/Acct # _____

Broker Name/Acct # _____

Safety Dep. Bank/Box # _____

Location of Will/Trust: _____

Other Notes for Loved Ones: _____

TRACKER REPORT



By John Dupla

With the current health climate and uncertainties that we are experiencing, I voted to cancel this year's VDHA reunion. I was looking forward to attending and sharing new adventures with fellow dog handlers. However, health and safety comes first. Along with that, the trackers are in limbo as I write this article about their reunion. It is scheduled for June 25-28 in Greenville, SC. The state is currently in quarantine mode. As of today, the decision has been made to keep the date. I will have to let everyone know if it changes.

Estel Matt forwarded me an e-mail with a video attached that was sent to him by a friend of a fellow tracker. The video was sent by Dennis Thibodeux that served with tracker Roger Faulk. Roger passed away in February 2019. It shows them in Vietnam on film around their base camp. It was interesting to be reminded by how young we were by viewing the film clip. It seems I was there just last week.

I got another e-mail from Frank Merritt. It included a story about another tracker, Mike Mulholland, 557th IPCT, 101st Div. He was doing research in finding trackers that served with him and *Googled* Bernard "Pat" Patterson. To his surprise, several newspaper stories and a book titled *The Greatest Mars Hill Bank Robbery* popped up. Apparently, Pat robbed a bank in Mars Hill, Maine which was the biggest bank robbery in that state. When his money ran out, Pat turned himself in. When asked why he did it, his reply was, "the VA wouldn't give me a loan, so I decided to take out my own." I wonder how many veterans could relate to that?

Speaking of books, Russell "Doc" Walters, Major USAR, retired and VDHA member, sent me a copy of his latest published book, *MICHAEL GUNN- The autobiography of an M-1911 .45 ACP, as told to Francis Kane with R.T. Budd*. R.T. Budd is "Doc" Walters pen name. It's considered historical-fiction.

It is the story of a M-1911 military Colt .45 who dictates his life story to Francis Kane and tells how he was used by his many "handlers" in his life. The story incorporates actual historical events using Michael Gunn's handlers to advance the story. I personally read the book in a matter of days. I highly recommend it for those that like to read. It can be purchased on Amazon in E-print and hardback.

On another note, my wife and I have been getting unsolicited mail from many organizations asking for donations related to Military Working Dogs (MWD). We've received letters from organizations like Mission

K9 Rescue, Wounded Warrior Dogs Project, America's VetDogs, and Paws for Purple Hearts, to name a few. I don't know anything about them nor how we got on their mailing list. Some include nice calendars and other items.

While it is encouraging to know MWD's and handlers are finally getting recognition, I do have some reservations. For one, as long as I have been associated with the VDHA, we have never solicited monies by promotional mailings or other means to honor our handlers or MWD's. All the officers volunteer their time and in some cases cover our own costs in supporting the VDHA. I am proud of this and will participate under these principles. That being said, my suggestion to our membership is: don't rob any banks, read a good book (hint, hint), support the VDHA and stay healthy.

Until then, SEEK ON.

2nd Marine Scout Dog Platoon

Don St. Amant, of the 2nd Marine scout dog platoon, was in Vietnam from March 1967 to May 1968. He is trying to locate and reconnect with fellow veterans from his unit. If you knew Don in Vietnam or can help, please e-mail him at: donst50@icloud.com.

Thanks!

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.

Obituary for An Unknown Dog Handler

by Ernie Ayala

It isn't a rare occurrence that one of our dog handlers gets lost in the cracks of obscurity. But one of his buddies wanted to make things right. He wanted to salute his friend, who died alone in his residence without the love of his family. But he was remembered by a few of his veteran buddies who knew he was a dog handler in Vietnam.

Combat veteran Derrick Jones met Winfield Patterson in Carlsbad, CA when he moved there from Indiana. They became good buddies. And while Patterson didn't like talking about Vietnam, he did finally disclose that he was a dog handler and how much he loved the dogs' abilities to protect our troops in battle. He was proud to have served as one of the first to be deployed as a scout dog handler and what a difference it made in the pursuit of the enemy from then on.

His dog was Shep. Patterson served with the 50th Infantry Scout Dog Platoon and Vietnam was no strange

place for him as he served three tours there.

Jones did not really know much about Patterson and we do not have much information either. They were good friends because they had something in common; Vietnam. But they didn't get together with beers to tell war stories with each other. As combat soldiers, they preferred to go fishing or have barbeques, not talk about war.

When the time came and Patterson died, Jones always felt he was a veteran dog handler who came and went without even a thank you for his service. Jones was too busy with other things, but never felt he could do anything about it until he discovered there was a Vietnam Dog Handler Association. He contacted us and felt we could remember his legacy. Thank you for your service Winfield Patterson.



Sgt. Winfield Patterson and his scout dog Shep, RVN 20 March 1967



Sgt. Coleman, Sgt. Patterson and Sgt. Hazelette, 50th IPSD, 26 May 1967.

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The deadline for new photos and articles, is August 23 for the September issue.

Should War Dog Handlers Have Their Brains Picked?

By George Cartter

It was in February, before COVID-19 shifted the character of our fevers and headaches related to social interaction. My wife and I were leaving a local café after breakfast. Exiting ahead of us was a man with his seeing-eye dog, also accompanied by the man's wife or companion. I really wanted to quiz the guy about his relationship with his dog. What had their training been like? How long had they been together? How did he read his dog's cues and clues? Such an interrogation seemed like it'd be an imposition, so I let it go.

Later it hit me: the commonality with seeing-eye dog handlers and military dog handlers: if you miss the read, it could result in a life or death or serious injury situation.

A few months earlier I'd read Brandon Keim's National Geographic special publication *Secrets of Animal Communication*. I generally dismiss "Secrets of . . ." material, but this was well done, with a section on interspecies communication. That prompted me to re-read Stanley Coren's *The Intelligence of Dogs*, a very readable book. The author's assessments of dogs' mental capabilities rang true to my K-9 trooper experiences and my time with a few household dogs.

That led me to ask myself, why haven't academics who study animal cognition and communication quizzed military dog handlers and seeing-eye dog handlers? Or maybe they have, and I'm just unaware of such studies.

I remember Wofford College (South Carolina) psychology professor John W. Pilley, who wrote *Chaser, Unlocking the Genius of the Dog Who Knows a Thousand Words*. Pilley's dog, Chaser, was pushing the limits of what was accepted as canine mental

abilities. One issue was a dog's ability to understand by name individual items. Chaser knew hundreds of toys by individual name.

As Pilley took Chaser, a border collie, to sheep herding training, he was startled to find out that a number of border collie owners had dogs that could cut a particular, named sheep out of a familiar flock, as in "Rover bring Harriet."

Anecdotal dog stories are not science, but lots of dog stories, especially from seeing-eye or military dog handlers, could provide data points of perception, or, as in the case with a dog being able to identify individual sheep in a flock, point to areas that may call for further research in animal cognition.

Konrad Lorenz won a Nobel Prize for his work on animal behavior. He noted in *Man Meets Dog* that dogs seem to have come into their relationship with humans of their own accord. It's also recognized that dogs and people have lived together for at least fourteen thousand years and perhaps three or four times that length of time. Even the conservative figure pre-dates humans' development of agriculture. That is a long-term relationship.

Might VDHA members be a source for researchers in the field of communications development? Or should some seeing-eye handlers and/or trainers be invited to a VDHA gathering to share dog relationship experiences? What questions to ask? Several come to mind, like how to read different dogs working the same kind of assignment? What different issues does the dog have in completing an assignment? What working dog experiences surprised the handler the most? I doubt I'm the only old dog guy interested in such stuff.

Change to Website "Taps"

By Dave Broeker
VDHA Webmaster



I made a few changes on how "Taps" listings are displayed on our website. For years, I tried to give each deceased Dog Handler a "spot" for them to shine by posting their name, photo, unit and date of death.

Now, as we 'Old Dawgs' are dropping left and right, I've had up to 24 listings at one time and the column gets as long as your arm. To date, we have 32 deaths reported since January 1, 2020. (We only had 34 deaths reported in the entire year in 2019.)

This is why Taps listings are now listed by name only. Each name listed links to their profile where any information we have on them is listed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Checking:	\$36,254.93
Savings:	5,078.10
Total:	\$41,333.03

All refunds for the reunion have been paid and cleared.

Uniformly, Olive Drab

... Continued from Page 5.

My favorite inter-service moment happened at a trailer on base that served as a snack bar/library. I was standing in line at the snack bar, looking forward to a grilled ham and cheese sandwich (a significant upgrade from C-rations or the standard chow hall fare).

The Army troop in front of me was a big guy, 6'4 or 5. I notice he had a dog patch on his left shoulder: Snoopy lounging on his dog house roof. (We wore a yellowish-orange snarling dog patch on our left shoulder. It looked kind of like a cross between a tiger and a golden marmot.). Anyway, I figured maybe the guy was a K-9 troop at the nearby 173rd Airborne base camp. In a very uncool, too chipper voice, I asked "Are you K-9?" He looked down on me, literally and figuratively, and sniffed—maybe picking up on a hint of dry dog drool and/or dog stool from my fatigues--and answered, "Electronic surveillance." And that was the end of the conversation.

About thirty years later, the inter-service Vietnam Dog Handler Association came into sight. At the 2018 reunion in San Diego, I met ex-Army scout dog handler, Mike Hurder. Trained as a scout dog handler, he admits spending time at Bien Hoa doing K-9 team sentry duty. I have enjoyed staying in touch with Mike since then. I've had perhaps an over-appreciation of scout dog handlers, on the grounds that when one goes looking for trouble, one is likely to find it, whereas sentry dog handlers just strolled around waiting for trouble to show up. Important distinction.

My dog King X363 (aka Gramps) and I did only one off-base patrol, a scout-mine-booby assignment: checking out a local Vietnamese graveyard for tunnels, weapons, and explosive caches. After Tet in 1968, it was realized that the Viet Cong used several cemeteries as places to cache equipment (think: places where people inconspicuously bury large boxes). Of course, sending out a sentry dog, trained to alert on humans, and expecting him to alert on explosives, is like hiring a dentist to fix your plumbing. No tunnels, no explosives and no booby traps were found.

It's all there somewhere in generic olive drab; significant noses; scout-sentry-tracker-mine-booby; with a faint whiff of wet dog hair about the whole thing.

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VDHA Message Board Issue

*By Dave Broeker
VDHA Webmaster*

Past Message Board posts are no longer accessible by migrating to past message posts. Access IS available if you can enter a word or group of words that you can search on. There are 1,039 old messages and using Advanced Search narrows down the search.

Example Instructions:

First, login to website (www.vdha.us) using your member number and password. Once there, click on the 'Advanced Search' button.

Check the 'Message Board' box. Under 'Key Word' enter "Agent Orange." At bottom of page, select "Advanced Search" to begin the search for any past messages that had the words 'Agent Orange' in it. In this case, 20 past messages were found that had the words 'Agent Orange' in them. Search through them to see if you can find the information you are looking for.

A Search for the word "U-Tapao" netted 6 results. A Search for the word "Reunion" netted 90 results.

NOTE: At the bottom of the page of 'Search Results' there are 3 pages listed. In all cases, only Page 1 has search results. Pages 2 and 3 are empty. Below the page numbers, you can select 'Do Another Search' or 'Modify Search.'

Our website was created in March of 2007, so it is over 13 years old. The website support from Newfangled is extremely limited since ownership has been sold and they strongly suggest we create a brand new website costing in excess of \$30,000. This is not affordable and we continue to find 'work-around' solutions. The VDHA is maintaining a list of problems like this to be considered in future website upgrades. I am available via email to assist you at Webmaster@VDHA.us.