



DOGMAN

A Brotherhood of All Combat Veteran Dog Handlers



VIETNAM DOG HANDLER ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 29 - NUMBER 2 - JUNE 2022

2022 San Antonio Reunion

*By Bob Palochik
VDHA Treasurer*

Well, the 2022 VDHA Reunion in San Antonio is over and I might say, in my humble opinion, although we did not have the biggest turnout as we have in the past, I believe it was one of the best. I just felt like all who were there shared a great togetherness that I haven't seen in many past reunions.

At the General Membership meeting, when we opened the floor to our fellow handlers, we had many great comments, views and location selections for the next reunion. All of our members joined in and offered some absolutely fantastic ideas that, well, made the entire reunion seem to gel.

I want to personally thank some people that helped make this reunion a success. Col. Tim Hennessey took time from his Easter Sunday when Debbie and I arrived and took us to the local Walmart so we could purchase the beer, soda, water and snacks for the Hospitality Room. Vern and Sharron Anderson helped Debbie with registration on Monday and throughout the reunion; thanks guys. I want to thank John Dupla. He was driving in from Galveston and when I could not find any Pepsi in San Antonio, John stopped along the way and brought in 4 cases. I want to thank Tsgt. O'Brien and his staff at Lackland Dog School for putting on such a great demonstration on how our dogs work.

I especially want to thank Col. Medsger and his crew from the DOD at the Pentagon for coming down and spending time with all of us for two days. It was the highlight of the reunion. They stayed for hours and answered questions, mingled with our members, came to our banquet dinner and stayed again for hours. As I said, it was the highlight of the reunion and gave all of us the assurance that our Legacy will continue. Thanks Col. Medsger from all of us.

I want to thank young Major Bruton from Lackland. He is commander of the Dog School who came to our meeting and dinner and went over the



Mission of the Dog School and wanted any feedback we could give him to make the Dog School even better than it is.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the VDHA and our members for awarding me the Medal of Valor. My Brothers, you have no idea how much I appreciated this unexpected award. I am so humbled and honored that words cannot express how I feel. After making a tearful acceptance speech (which John Homa told me to keep short) I wanted to accept this award with the undying help of my wife Debbie. She and I do the reunion out of love; nothing else. Without her help during the planning, I could not do it, so thank you to my best friend and dear wife.

That's it my Brothers for my article, I dearly hope to see all of you, and hopefully many more, at the next reunion. God Bless you all, thank you for coming and above all, Welcome Home My Brother.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

By John R. Harvey
VDHA President

Hello everyone. Usually my first letter following our reunion is one of awe as I describe the wonderful time I had. Unfortunately, I am like the rest of you having to wait for the accounts of all those who were able to attend. My wife and I came down with COVID the day before we were to leave for San Antonio. So instead of enjoying the 100-degree weather in San Antonio we survived our 100-degree fevers.

I do want to thank all of those who did attend and made it into another memorable event. My particular thanks goes out to your treasurer and his wife Bob Palochik and Deb for all of their hard work in keeping the event organized. I also want to thank John Homa and Vernon Anderson for presenting this year's Warrior's Medal of Valor. Also, Sergeant Major Viridiana Lavallo from HQDA Military War Dog Program for helping put together a memorable presentation. There are many others who deserve recognition. To all of you, I say thank you.

Sometimes one set back leads to another opportunity. Because of my COVID episode, we had to cancel our overseas trip scheduled for May. This provided me with the opportunity to attend the Fort Benning Rededication of the beautiful War Dog Memorial held on May 14. Jeff Bennet was one of the keynote speakers. Jeff, if you remember, was the moving force behind the documentary War Dogs: America's Forgotten Heroes and the memorial located at Marsh Field in Riverside, California.

Special accolades also go to Albert Johnson, an Iraqi dog handler and Dixie Whitman, a long-time supporter of military working dogs. My congratulations to everyone who was involved in organizing a great weekend. There were close to 100 participants. Our Sgt-of-Arms, Mike Duran, assisted me in presenting a congratulatory proclamation to the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum.

I had the privilege of meeting and spending some time with SSgt Robert Hartsock's sister and niece. SSgt Hartsock, you recall, was the only dog handler to be awarded the Medal of Honor in Vietnam. There is a pedestal next to the monument in his honor. He was serving with the 44th Infantry Platoon Scout Dog in February 1969 when he gave up his life to save others.

I also had the privilege of meeting Lance Cpl. Michael Vancosky's sister Annie who was attending the rededication. Lance Cpl. Vancosky was serving as

a USMC Scout Dog handler in Quang Tin Province in May 1970 when he and his dog Chief were killed during a patrol. As we participate in this year's Memorial Day remembrances we need to keep in our prayers the families of those who gave their all.

Your BX is back open for business. It was unfortunate that we were not able to have the merchandise at the reunion. That said, I encourage you to visit our web site and order a couple of great short sleeve shirts for this summer's activities.

Your board of directors will soon begin planning our next reunion. Some of the decisions are whether we should hold it in 2023 or 2024; should it be a weekend event, or did Monday–Thursday work; should it be in the Spring or the Fall? Where should it be held? I welcome any suggestions along with the reasons for the recommendation. We have found that having boots on the ground (meaning a VDHA member who is available in the selected city to help with the execution of the reunion) is an added advantage.

Welcome home.

483rd SPS K9 50th Reunion

By Steve Janke
VDHA Chaplain

This Oct 20th the men of the 1970-71 K9 division from Cam Ranh Bay met in Knoxville Tennessee. We have been meeting yearly the past several years. This year we lost three of our close friends. Lyle Zizonas was lost to cancer, Jerry Guinn was lost to Covid-19 and Rick Julian who was our Kennelmaster and NCOIC, passed away from cancer as well. We held a memorial service for them at the hotel on Sunday before leaving. We have become a very close group. The wives also have become close friends as well. We enjoyed our time together as well as taking in the sites of Knoxville and enjoying a riverboat cruise complete with a nice meal.



Warriors Medal of Valor – 2022 Recipient



John Homa reads the Warriors Medal of Valor citation at the VDHA reunion banquet with Vernon Anderson.

*By John Harvey
VDHA President*

Bob Palochik enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1966 and served with the 14th SPS, in Nha Trang, Vietnam as a Scout Dog Handler during 1967-1968. Bob was active with the SAC Elite Guard 1969-1970.

He handled two dogs, Tiger and Major. Tiger was Bob's first dog. They trained at Lackland AFB. Tiger was killed in action during the Tet Offensive in 1968. Bob picked up Major after the TET Offensive and completed his tour with him.

Bob was nominated for the Warriors Medal of Valor Award for Outstanding Service to the VDHA. Bob has been a very active VDHA member since 2000. He has served for the past 19 years on the VDHA Board of Directors as Treasurer and continues in that position.

Bob held the position of Unit Director for the 14th SPS (Nha Trang, Vietnam) for almost 6 years from 2003 through 2009. He was able to locate five former members of the 14th SPS who served from 1967 through 1968. He has also been contacted by several former members of the 14th SPS who were



Vernon Anderson presents the 2022 medal to Bob Palochik.

there prior to 1967 and after 1968. He was even able to communicate with the handler who took over his dog, Major.

Bob assisted Dave Broecker with design, testing and introduction of our new website in 2007 so that it would be much easier to use. His input and time testing the system was very important to make sure our access to the website would work successfully.

He is also being nominated for outstanding and consistent or ongoing service to or for Military Working Dogs, past or present. On an ongoing basis, Bob continues to collect, correct and archive information on Military Working Dogs, handlers, and their contact information. Dog information that does not exist in the VDHA data base or needs some type of correction is often added or revised by Bob when veterans join the VDHA or existing members renew their memberships.

Bob is also being nominated for outstanding and consistent or ongoing service to or for veterans. Since 2003, Bob and his wife Debbie have organized the VDHA reunions, making sure that all the details are in order. These details include bus



Bob Palochik accepts the award, thanking his wife Debbie.

tours, hotel room arrangements, special handicap accommodations, advertising in the Dogman and catering arrangements for the hospitality room and VDHA dinner, just to name a few.

Bob is also a Patriot Guard Bike Rider. The organization was founded to honor and shield families of fallen heroes and first responders from those that would disrespect the services of loved ones by uninvited guests.

Bob works tirelessly in support of Veterans and the VDHA and all that it stands for, with the help of his wife Debbie. Together they have a very close family with five children and 18 grandchildren.

It is quite apparent that Bob's devotion and love for his fellow Veteran "Brothers," as well as our four-legged K9 friends, is never ending!

Bob once said, "I think that every member of the VDHA should work with a never-ending passion to find information about their four-legged partners. They did not have any say on how long his or her tour would be, or how it would end. These Warriors gave it their all and had hearts the size of California."

Four Generations Devoted to K9

By Dixie Whitman

Courtesy of The Paw Print and

Military Working Dog Heritage Museum

The Fort Benning event didn't go as planned.

Planned is a word indicating a corporeal initiative conceived and guided by our volunteers. Instead, an overarching spirit of unity, hope, and courage directed the weekend despite a few hiccups, like one box of event t-shirts shipped to some far-off location.

Good fortune painted our event using pigments of appreciation, enthusiasm, and motivation to trace stirring impressions. Emotions and awe elbowed their way to the forefront with true icons and legends in our midst: SFC Jesse Mendez (Ret.); John Meeks, II; Johnny Mayo; SGM Viridiana Lavalley; and MSgt Chris Willingham (Ret.). Echoing words found in the German Shepherd dog standard, "the event was stamped with a look of quality and nobility - difficult to define, but unmistakable when present." The elusive "look of eagles" perched among us.

We are thankful for the courage and uplifting leadership of SGM Viridiana Lavalley and the Vietnam-era handlers, who rose beyond their sorrow and loss through their steadfast spirit and love of their brothers and sisters. We are equally grateful for today's handlers, who create their unique paths through diligence, determination, and devotion. These young men and women remind us of where we've been and where we're going.

And we are genuinely motivated daily by the depth and focus of our organization. Our team executed the rededication with verve —our sincere thanks to Lane for his brilliant job as MC, our keynote speaker MSgt Chris Willingham (Ret.), and Mr. Jeffrey Bennett, who shared their insightful words.

At the end of the ceremony, the chaplain, CPT Warren Powell, nailed the benediction. "Receive the benediction. May the Lord bless you and keep you. May he shield you as you walk through the wall. May he keep eyes keen, ears alert, teeth sharp, and noses wet. Amen." As CPT Powell finished, Lane turned to him and said, "I think that's the best benediction I've heard. Outstanding."

Four score handlers, veterinarians, and vet techs approached the monument in single file. Flanking them, a K9 Honor Guard assembled by SGM Lavalley provided a moving tribute honoring the heartbeat of our history.



Generations of dog handlers gather together to rededicate the memorial at Ft. Benning. (Photos courtesy of the Photography Staff of Military Working Dog Heritage Museum.)

Shortly, the mood turned from somber and reflective to awestruck and joyful as the crowd gathered at big old Doughboy Stadium to watch tough and talented dog teams from the Fort Benning and Fort Rucker Kennels take the field. CPL Rippin and his impressive MWD, Tina, started us off as he showcased focus and precision heeling. The obstacle course, tactical work, bite work, and the chute all played key roles in the exhibition of expert dog handling and captivating decoying.

Following the dog demonstration, Fort Benning kennels invited veteran dog handlers, veterinarians, and

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DOGMAN

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

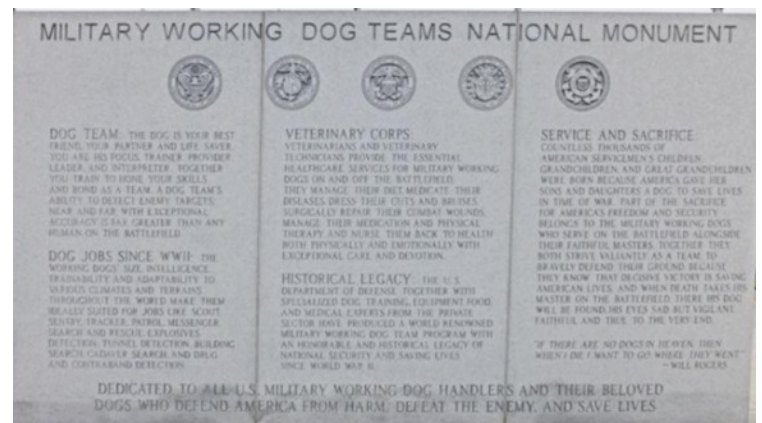
Letters and stories are subject to editing. Email all submissions to Dogman@VDHA.us or mail to Steve Lemish, Dogman Editor, 152 W. Park Avenue, Suite 150, El Cajon, CA 92020 (include a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want them returned).

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2022 Reunion in San Antonio



2022 Reunion Lackland AFB Tour



Rededication: Reflections on Fort Benning

by Michael Hurder

Courtesy of The Paw Print and

Military Working Dog Heritage Museum

In his eyes, I saw hope and anticipation. I also saw fear, loss, and regret. I knew him from that look. Without even knowing his name, I could tell his history. I knew where he'd been, what he'd seen, what he'd done—to make it back here. He wondered, at one time, if it was worth it. He asked himself, "did I do the right thing?" His thoughts brought out the doubts. Should it have been him instead of Harry? Was there something else he could have, should have done?

He didn't make his friend jump in front to save another's life. The hero just did it before anyone else could react. Perhaps, had he been a little quicker on the draw and not so stunned by the surprise of the attack, he might have been a paladin. Instead, here he was fifty years later, looking into the eyes of equally guilt-ridden brothers who also made it back when so many others, more worthy, didn't.

I had a glimpse into the souls of so many brothers and sisters this weekend that I am full to the brim with love, pride, joy, and gratitude. I am also overwhelmed with the empty feelings of the missing. Many of those who left us, either during the fight or since have gone too soon. The chasm they've left behind beckons to us all. "Come home," it cries. We falter yet again. We are not ready.

The void created by this initial uncertainty eventually overflowed with funny, gutsy, and scary stories. They all have one glaring similarity. They all include claims of heroic K9s, the storyteller's K9 being the best one ever

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Handlers had the opportunity for touching the memorial following the rededication, during the Laying on of Hands.

Vietnam Dog Handler Association Officers

President:	John R. Harvey	3000 Holiday Dr., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316	860-796-7813
Executive V.P.	Ernie Ayala	13862 Mardi Gras Lane, Riverside, CA 92503	626-862-2667
V.P. Trackers	John Dupla	904 Chetwood Dr., League City, TX 77573	281-332-2163
V.P. Thailand	Dave Broeker	1712 Crescent Dr., Pekin, IL 61554-1637	309-202-5542
V.P. Units	Vacant		
Secretary	Vern Anderson	9343 Jamaica Beach, Galveston TX 77554	409-737-9085
Treasurer	Bob Palochik	10125 Skye Saddle Ave., L.V., NV 89166	702-557-3538
Assoc. Director	Dennis Lewis	PO Box 699, Pikeville, NC 27863-0699	919-242-9620
Sgt. at Arms	Michael Duran	124 Smotherman Ct., Murfreesboro, TN 37129	615-907-9084
Chaplain	Steve Janke	413 First Street., Carlstadt, NJ 07072	201-334-7676
Membership	Randy Kimler	2225 Merriman St., Port Neches, TX 77651	409-722-0889
BX Manager	Michael Hurder	986 Coronado Way, Livermore, CA 94550	925-518-0318
Webmaster	Dave Broeker	1712 Crescent Dr., Pekin, IL 61554-1637	309-202-5542
Asst Webmaster	Michael Hurder	986 Coronado Way, Livermore, CA 94550	925-518-0318
Historian:	Vacant		
Dogman Editor:	Steve Lemish	105 W. F Street, #206, San Diego, CA 92101	619-444-5525

DEADLINE

**ARTICLES FOR
THE
SEPTEMBER
ISSUE MUST
BE SUBMITTED
BY AUGUST 23**

New Facebook Administrator Recently Appointed

By Jim Stiles

VDHA Facebook Administrator

Hello fellow VDHA members. I'm happy to be appointed as the administrator for our Facebook group and I am looking forward to interacting with everyone.

I spent 18 months as a handler and K9 Flight Chief at CRB. I volunteered for Vietnam after being at Little Rock AFB for a couple years. I met my future wife while there so we ended up making Arkansas our home after the service.

If you have not yet, please join our Facebook group. You just have to answer a couple questions (required to help keep the spammers out) and then read and agree to a few simple rules. They are just basic group rules to keep things civil. This is the link to the group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/vdha.us/?ref=share_group_link

I'm also the new Unit Director for the 12th SPS K9 at Cam Ranh Base. If you were stationed there, or know of others, please message or email me. I need to make a roster of everyone so we can keep track of everyone and make it easier for buddies to find each other. My email is jimstiles7413@gmail.com or you can message me through Facebook.



VDHA Presented with RMO



By Bob Palochik

VDHA Treasurer

The Round Metal Object (RMO) or coin (pictured above) was presented to the VDHA at the 2022 San Antonio Reunion by SGM Viridiana Lavallo, Office of the Provost Marshal General's office, DoD MWD Program, located at the Pentagon.

SGM Lavallo, along with nine other members of the DoD MWD Program were grateful for the opportunity to join our group in the hospitality room on Tuesday, April 19th, to enlighten us in the functionality of their department. Members of the DoD MWD included Program Managers and other leaders representing the Army, Air Force, Navy and the Marines. Members spent a few hours with our group listening to our stories, answering questions, and partaking in food and beverages.

In addition, a few of the members attended the banquet and spoke, enjoyed the food and drink and again mingled among us for another couple of hours.

In conclusion, they, more than once, assured us that our legacy would be carried on and they would add their own to it.

Treasurer's Reunion Report

CURRENT FUNDS:

Checking	\$30,588.03
Savings	5,075.60
TOTAL	\$35,663.63

REUNION RECAP:

78	Registered (35 members and 24 spouse-guests)
19	Canceled registrations mostly due to illness
59	Total members/spouses-guests attended

Donations – John Homa from sales at reunion \$115

65	Registered for tour. 12 Canceled. A total of 53 members/spouse-guests attended Lackland AFB tour
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70	Registered for dinner. 19 Canceled. A total of 51 members/spouse-guests attended dinner
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50/50 Raffle -	Total collected \$480
	John Homa won \$240 from the raffle and Fred Cobb won the \$25.00 Visa gift card

BX sales total:	\$513
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Rededication at Ft Benning

Continued from page 7.

until the following story unfolds - and then the next, and the next.

The old and younger men and women, the past handlers, marvel at the new breed. The fresh look and feel of their pride. The professional way they execute their tasks. Their willingness, more a desire, to follow the inspirational leadership of their NCOs and Officers lights a fire of memories within us.

The fur missiles who work beside these young men and women bring thoughts of our own time on the other end of the leash, both blessed and cursed.

We remember, laugh, cry, and empty our souls in front of a monument built to remind all of the sacrifice, courage, and compassion it took to be a part of this community. Escorting the family of a true-blue hero catches my emotions in my throat. I stumble, only to be held up by this beautiful and loving family. Still, they give of themselves to support our community. Still, they cause me to feel small.

We place our trembling hands on the likeness of our never-forgotten partners until our messages connect. "I'm coming soon, buddy. I'll see you over the bridge, and I look forward to it. Thank you for giving me these years to heal and grow. You are always in my thoughts and heart. I love you, and I always will."

Our passions spent, we retreat to gather and relive the times since our last meeting. Some of us find new brothers and sisters who've been on our team since they took up the leash. We are just now getting acquainted. The stories are the same, with differences in the location only. We've all felt the power of the bond. We've all felt the pride of belonging to this elite group and the knowledge that we, as MWD teams, are force multipliers, the likes of which are few and far between.

Just as it was the hardest thing we ever did to leave our partners for whatever reason, the regret is again palpable. It's difficult to say goodbye after this get-together. We can't help but wonder if there will be a next time while looking forward to it just the same, promising to be there when it happens.

I look once more into the eyes of my brothers and sisters. I see peace. I see hope. I see me.

WOOF, brothers and sisters.

(Photos courtesy of the Photography Staff of Military Working Dog Heritage Museum.)



At the War Dog Memorial at Sacrifice Field in Fort Benning, Vietnam Era dog handlers lay roses in front of the Pedestal honoring KIA dogs.



Three Members of the Board of Directors of the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum join handlers from Fort Benning and Fort Rucker at Doughboy Stadium at Fort Benning, for an epic dog demonstration.

The Tip of the Sword; A War Dog Story

Editor's Note: This is the fourth installment of a multi-part story It details his story from college to Vietnam and his dog Skipper (X268).

By Vernon J. Roman

Scout Dog Handler

After graduating from dog school, it was off to Richland, PA for a 30-day leave. It was then time to make the drive into Pittsburgh. I boarded a flight with a lot of other soldiers to make our trip across the pond to the Republic of South Vietnam.

Per my DD214, I served in Vietnam from November 3, 1969 until August 16, 1970 (nine months and 14 days). I was assigned to the 43rd Infantry Platoon Scout Dog, 1st Brigade of the 5th Infantry Division. The 5th Mechanized Unit was under the designation of the *RED DIAMOND.*

We were located in I CORP, which is the upmost part of South Vietnam. We were as close as you can get to the North Vietnamese. On a clear day, you could see the enemy across the DMZ going to eat in their chow lines.

I vividly remember our arrival in country. I had a window seat, and as we approached Tan Son Nhut Air Base to land, I gazed out the plane window. All I saw were holes. It was incredible to see that much land filled with nothing but holes...VERY BIG HOLES...like a very bad case of acne. The land was full of bomb craters everywhere I look. "...Toto ...you're no longer in Kansas..."

When the door of the plane opened, we started to disembark. As I approached the plane's door, it was like walking into a solid wall of fire. I hit that door and the heat smashed into my body so hard that it literally took my breath away. If that was not enough, then my nose was assaulted with the god awful smell of human excrement. God...What a filthy, filthy place. Welcome to Dante's Inferno.

I was in need of a bathroom. At our location, that meant a wooden outhouse that could accommodate up to six people at a time. I picked out a seat and was settling in when the door opened and UNBELIEVABLE to me at that time! A Vietnamese LADY came in, pulled up her outfit and sat down *RIGHT* next to me. CHEEK TO CHEEK! She could have at least chosen a location farther apart.

HEAT...SMELL and now, I have a Vietnamese LADY sitting on the outhouse TOILET beside me. I have been in country about 20 minutes, and my system was already in major shock. She did her thing, got up and

left. It was more than a few minutes before I was able to complete my objective, compose myself and actually get up to leave the confines of the latrine.

I do not know what the other soldiers did, but, as a dog handler, those of us arriving went to a special compound area. There we would meet our dog, spend a week assimilating to the climate, and generally get acquainted with the dog we would be taking to the field. At the end of the week, we were then given our orders assigning us to our units.

Of our arriving group, three of us were from the same dog school class and knew each other. Interestingly (at the end of the week) all of us received orders to go to the same scout dog unit.

But, first things first. We needed to get out and retrieve our assigned dogs. It was just like at Dog School. You were given a dog's name and his location. It's up to you how you got control of the dog.

This caused me an anxious moment. Several of the handlers were told they were going to need to take a club with them. These were combat dogs and they were not necessarily going to have a good disposition. Not to worry. My dog was a pretty white and brown dog. (I have long-forgotten his name). He was as friendly as any family pet. No club needed there.

My first big problem was now in front of me. It took only one training run to realize that my dog was just that... A DOG. He had no intention of looking for anything or anybody. Today, we know that even the dogs get PTSD, and their system just shuts down. That was the case for my assigned dog. He had shut down.

The problem, of course, is how do you establish that the dog will no longer work and that I just was not a poor inept dog handler who could not read the dog? So, my very *first life and death challenge* was my need to establish that, in fact, I was a very good dog handler, and that this dog had just quit.

My two partners from class, along with the in-country trainer, joined me on a special course run with the dog. No one saw any indication of any type of an alert. Regardless of what we were all seeing, it still looked like the Army was going to make me take that dog to the field anyway. It would be up to me to bring him out of his funk. To me and my two companions it was clear that if I was forced to take this dog to the field, that neither I nor the dog stood much of a chance in hell of surviving.

Continued in the next issue.

K9 Veterans Day in Wisconsin

By Ron Werneth

It was great to attend the superb 2022 Wisconsin K-9 Veterans Day which was held in Ft. Atkinson, WI on March 13. I have to say hats off to "Queen Dog Lady" Mabel Schumacher & all the volunteers for putting so much work into this special event which honors our K-9 Teams of literally every type of service including military, law enforcement, search and rescue, etc. - all our working dogs (and their "human" handlers too).

The event kicked off with a wreath laying and short service at the K-9 Memorial dedicated to fallen Vietnam USMC scout dog handler Lance Corporal Terry Beck & his K-9 Seato. We appreciate the participation of so many Vietnam K-9 handler veterans such as Jerry Witt (34th IPSP), Rick Hong (47th IPSP), John Meeks (42nd IPSP) and USAF Dogmen Carl Adams and Kim Michalowski along with Ken Claflin (Army, sentry).

I was very moved by the acknowledgement and appreciation for our law enforcement teams who were well-represented from many different police departments. It was well-deserved even more so in these trying times we live in. Notable law enforcement K-9 heroes were Kenosha County Sheriff Deputy Terry Tifts & K-9 Riggs. You can see a news video about Riggs' action to apprehend a dangerous suspect and being shot in the process: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zGQKVLHTk4>. His medals and citations are pictured to the right of this paragraph.

Keynote speaker & U.S. War Dogs Association Chapter 3 President John Meeks knocked it out of the park with his presentation. John expertly covered the entire history of our military working dogs along with sharing some of his own Vietnam wartime experiences with his hero, K-9 Artus. Thanks so much John & U.S. War Dogs for your participation and support of this special event.

I appreciate my buddy Mark Stone assisting with my War Dog Museum display. Besides all "War Dog" artifacts, I tried my best to include some of law enforcement K-9 items to acknowledge them



WE ENCOURAGE ALL VDHA MEMBERS TO SUBMIT
ARTICLES, PHOTOS, OR LETTERS FOR
PUBLICATION IN DOGMAN

Four Generations Devoted to K9

Continued from page 4.

vet techs to a private, special event. They were taken on a grand tour of the facility and were able to meet and greet the teams personally and spend some time in the shade eating a luncheon catered with love and respect.

The afternoon spared a few moments for attendees to briefly visit the extensive Smithsonian-level National Infantry Museum that sits just outside the fort's gates and across the parking lot from the host hotel. The National Infantry Museum also served as the venue for our banquet. Following Dennis Lewis' humble and heartfelt pre-meal prayer, we dined surrounded by the infantry's history, where many of our Vietnam-era handlers felt at home.

Three after-dinner speakers crafted eloquent speeches to entertain banquet goers. John Meeks, II, President of US War Dogs, Chapter 3, started with his illustrated history of Military Working Dogs. Following that theme, Johnny Mayo discussed the importance of remembering the dogs and how he created his War Dog Wall. In her thoughtful way, SGM Lavalley discussed the connections through history to the current handlers and military working dog world.

Two moving museum acquisitions occurred following the speeches. Carla Ann Anderson left everyone touched after sharing the story of the donation of her pet German shepherd, King, during the Vietnam War. His presence is still missed.

Albert received a surprising artifact, a jacket gifted by the Simonds family, presented by the three female Army personnel present. It is a unique and treasured artifact.

For the remainder of the evening, auctions were won and lost, drinks were stirred or shaken, and the finest, strongest gossamer strands of brotherhood, loyalty, and all things MWD wove a delicious tapestry made of marvelous K9 memories.

Our MWD Heritage Museum extends a profound and sincere thank you to all attendees.

K9 Leads the Way!

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Taps: LTC Buck Thackeray

By George W. Marlow III

I arrived with Buck in Vietnam. After the newness of arrival wore off, we got orders to deploy to scout dog platoons in their respective divisions. We were matched with a recycled dog and spent one to two weeks of indoctrination and training and then shipped off to our units. When we arrived at our new duty stations, it was great having soldiers (who became friends and comrades) to help us get settled in and assimilate to our new environment. Many of these relationships have endured a lifetime.

Leaders like Buck helped set standards and protocols for those who followed. They were able to give working guidelines to manage and implement our duties and responsibilities. Buck, being a platoon leader for the 40th Infantry Platoon Scout Dog Unit from 1966-1968, made the lives of soldiers who followed much easier. His courage and wisdom guided men to follow.

While talking with his wife Jan, I am able to feel Buck's love in her spiritual soul. She talks of his desire to comfort her and prepare her for his departure from this life, to his eternal assignment. The courage he showed, while enduring an ailment that is unrelenting, is a testament of his character. Jan has nothing but praise for Buck. The love he gave to her, his family, his friends and his country is awe inspiring.

He will be missed by all who knew him and never forgotten by those who love him. May his spirit be rekindled in the lives of his family and friends.

