



DOGMAN

A Brotherhood of All Combat Veteran Dog Handlers



VIETNAM DOG HANDLER ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 30 - NUMBER 2 - JUNE 2023

Invitation: Walking the Wire; The War Dogs Podcast

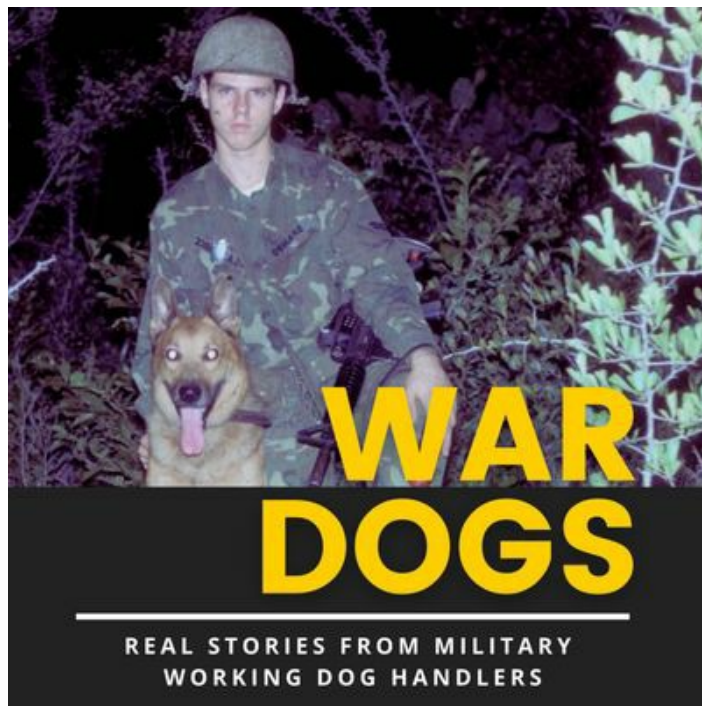
By Tom Shambo

During the Vietnam War, in the sprawling jungles and treacherous terrains, amidst the chaos and uncertainty of war, a special breed of warriors silently patrolled the darkness. They were the sentry dog handlers of the Vietnam War, unsung heroes who formed an unbreakable bond with their four-legged companions. These brave men and their loyal canine partners stood at the forefront of the fight, safeguarding troops, detecting dangers, and providing immeasurable support in the face of relentless adversity.

The role of sentry dog handlers in Vietnam often goes unnoticed in the annals of history, overshadowed by the larger narrative of the conflict. However, their contributions were nothing short of extraordinary. Every night, while the world slept, these courageous individuals ventured into the unknown, placing their trust in the keen senses and unwavering loyalty of their trusted canine partners.

Over the past 56 years, since I first stepped foot back on American soil, those nights kept popping up in my memory. I would share some of those memories with family, close friends, and my children, but some I kept for myself. I thought about those who served alongside me with their dogs and wondered if they had the same memories I did. During a Thanksgiving dinner a few years ago, my daughter and son-in-law posed a question that would ignite a spark within me: "Why don't you share those stories on a podcast?"

Initially, I found myself at a loss. The world of podcasting seemed unfamiliar and daunting to me. I lacked the knowledge of how to create or produce a podcast, and truth be told, I wasn't even sure what a podcast truly entailed. Considering this venture, a myriad of questions flooded my mind: who would I interview? Would anyone be willing to share their stories? Would anyone even listen to the podcast? Uncertainty loomed, casting a shadow of doubt on the possibility.



They sat me down and assured me they would help. From that moment forward, I got to work. I called a couple of the handlers I served with, who by now, were in their 70's and 80's, and asked if there was any interest in doing a podcast with me. As I suspected, I was met with some resistance as almost none of them had stories they felt like sharing. They too, had as many questions about a podcast as I had.

It took months before I could convince my first guest, Bill Fisher. We had a phone call so I could pitch my idea, and reassure Bill that there was no pressure for perfection. I just wanted to share our experience with any one who would listen. During that call, we spoke for an hour about the experience he had in Vietnam, and ultimately about the effects that Bill had following his time in Vietnam—he describes it as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). At the end of the call, I said, "Bill, if I had been recording our conversation, we

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From the President

By John R. Harvey
VDHA President

I imagine that not many of you know much about the “PAWS Act” which was signed into law August 25, 2021. The acronym stands for “Puppies Assisting Wounded Service-Members for Veterans Therapy ACT”. The Act is a five-year pilot to help the VA explore benefits of training service dogs for Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The program does not provide service dogs to participating Veterans. Rather it is a small group of eligible Veterans who participate in an eight-week training program that meets once a week for 90 minutes. The sessions include interactions with service dogs and their current owners (handlers) building relationships within the community, while being introduced to the skills and techniques to optimize service dog behavior.

A substantial part of the course is spent learning about the laws governing service dogs, contrasted with therapy dogs. A great deal of time is spent learning and understanding service dog and owner etiquette.

The Act establishes that a veteran who has participated in the pilot program may adopt a dog that the veteran assisted in training during the pilot if the veteran and the veteran’s health provider, in consultation with the entity that provided the canine training with respect to that dog under the pilot program, determine that it is in the best interest of the veteran.

The Act also establishes that participation in the pilot program may not preclude a veteran from receiving any other medical care or treatment for PTSD furnished by VA for which the veteran is otherwise eligible. The Act characterizes canine training as “an element of a complimentary and integrative health program.” The VA differentiates between “treatment services” and “well-being services”. The VA is implementing canine training under this pilot program as a well-being service designed to improve the veteran’s quality of life.

The program is an introduction to veteran assistance with mobility, hearing limitations and mitigation of the effects of PTSD on the veteran’s daily life. All of which are set against the backdrop of complying with today’s laws, rules and regulations concerning the conduct and access of our service dog companions in the public arena.

The pilot program has been offered in five VA medical centers: Anchorage, AK, Asheville, NC, Palo Alto, CA, San Antonio, TX, and West Palm Beach, FL.

The training process is significantly different from the training we provided our dogs used in Vietnam. Our training was predicated on praise, loyalty, and correction. The training provided under this regimen is based on treats, praise, and relationship. If you are interested and you live in an accessible geographical location, I would suggest that you speak to a representative at your VA center.

Free Honor Flights to D.C.

Honor Flight Network recognizes American veterans for your sacrifices and achievements by flying you to Washington, D.C. to see YOUR memorial at no cost.

Top priority is given to World War II and terminally ill veterans from all wars. Honor Flight Network has expanded to include Korean War and Vietnam War veterans. In order for Honor Flight Network to achieve this goal, guardians fly with the veterans on every flight providing assistance and helping veterans have a safe, memorable and rewarding experience.

For what you and your comrades have given to us, please consider this a small token of appreciation from all of us at Honor Flight Network.

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For further information, please contact Bobbie Bradley at: (937) 521-2400 ext. 104 or via email at eagle@honorflight.org.



Invitation: Walking the Wire; The War Dogs Podcast

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would have the first one in the bag!" After that, I was on a mission to find as many handlers as I could find to share their story, but more importantly, share our history.

The next interviewee on my list was Carl Adams, and what an incredible interview it turned out to be! Carl opened up a captivating dialogue about his journey into the world of K9 and how he found himself deployed to Vietnam. We delved into the intricacies of training, exploring both the preparation of the new dogs and the handlers themselves. The conversation with Carl shed light on the dedication and rigorous process involved in shaping these remarkable teams that would go on to make a profound impact amid war.

We discussed Craig Lord's on-the-job training (OJT) experience in Vietnam during my interview with him, concentrating on the important attack that happened in January 1969 at Phan Rang. The discussion revealed fascinating insights about the nature of these attacks, providing greater awareness of the difficulties faced by handlers in such dangerous circumstances. Notably, this major assault included both Bob Mays and Bob Dragich, who were both guests on the War Dogs Podcast. Bob Mays's memoir, "*Mortar Magnet*," served as an important source for understanding the severe effects of PTSD on countless handlers when they returned to their homes. Mays provided insight into the long-term repercussions and the lasting effects of the war and the toll it took on the mental well-being of those involved in the conflict.

Having spent an impressive three years in Vietnam, Dragich's

presence made a lasting impact. He forged a deep connection with Vietnam when he married a local girl, but he has since settled down in Alaska. During his time in country, Dragich played a pivotal role in the redevelopment of the sentry dog program. His valuable contributions and wealth of knowledge extended far beyond his immediate duties, making him an invaluable resource. We ended up extending Dragich's episode to a remarkable three sessions, allowing us to fully explore the wealth of knowledge he had to offer.

*Such stories of
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collective spirit.*

Bob Barry's story is a testament to the profound impact that the Vietnam War had on his life. As he shared his experiences with us, it became evident that his time in country forever altered his perspective. From enduring relentless attacks to witnessing the haunting reality of combat, including being shot at and returning fire, Bob's journey was filled with indescribable challenges.

One particular incident he recounted struck a chord with all who listened. It involved a fellow handler who wrote a heartfelt letter home, only to tragically lose his life

while innocently sitting in a chair outside the barracks. The weight of this loss reverberated throughout their unit, leaving an indelible mark on everyone who knew them. Such stories of sacrifice and loss remind us of the profound impact that war has on both individuals and the collective spirit.

Moreover, Bob Barry's contributions extended far beyond his service in Vietnam. He played a pivotal role in the establishment of the K-9 unit at the Pima County Sheriff's Office, leaving a lasting legacy that continues to benefit law enforcement to this day. His dedication to his fellow handlers and the noble cause of working with dogs exemplifies the enduring spirit of resilience that emerged from the crucible of war.

Tim Sparks opened up about the complex emotions he experienced during his time in Vietnam, particularly the lingering sense of guilt stemming from not directly engaging in attacks or penetrations. This internal struggle, common among many veterans, weighed heavily on his conscience.

Additionally, Tim bravely shared his ongoing journey PTSD and how he has found solace in self-medication as a means of coping with its effects.

Despite the challenges he faced, Tim has channeled his experiences into his passion for writing. Today, he is recognized as a prolific author, dedicating his literary talents to capturing the depth and complexity of the human condition. To explore his compelling works, I encourage you to search for Tim Sparks on Amazon, where his profound storytelling awaits.

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Invitation: Walking the Wire; The War Dogs Podcast

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Ernie Ayala, an Army sentry dog handler, underwent training at the Dog School in Okinawa. Throughout his service, he was stationed at Tay Ninh, Long Binh and Vinh Long, providing a firsthand perspective on the contrasting approaches employed by Army handlers compared to their counterparts in the Air Force. Notably, Ernie shared intriguing insights into the distinct methods and practices that distinguished these two branches. Following his time in the military, Ernie embarked on a new path as a writer and broadcaster for CBS. He played a pioneering role as one of the first cable newscasters, lending his expertise and unique perspective to the realm of journalism. The transition from the front lines of Vietnam to the world of media showcased his versatility and the breadth of his experiences.

Ron Aiello, a Marine scout dog handler, held a significant role as one of the pioneers deployed to Vietnam after the reactivation of the Scout dog program. With his trusted canine companion by his side, Ron fearlessly led a squad of Marines into villages, tirelessly searching for hidden Viet Cong forces. The remarkable bond between handler and dog proved invaluable as these highly trained animals skillfully detected and alerted their handlers to various scents and discovered items of significance. In the face of danger, Ron and his fellow handlers relied solely on their wits and a .45 caliber pistol, their sole weapon. These brave individuals demonstrated unwavering courage as they ventured into the unknown, relying on their instincts and the keen senses of their scout dogs.

Monty Moore, an Air Force sentry dog handler, fulfilled his duties at the Da Nang and Phu Cat air bases during his deployment. Displaying exceptional commitment, he extended his service for two years in Vietnam. Monty's passion for working with dogs and his dedication to his craft remained unwavering throughout his impressive 20-year career in the Air Force. His expertise encompassed not only handling and training dogs but also mentoring and guiding other handlers throughout his tenure.

Sadly, Monty Moore passed away in December 2022, just before his episode was scheduled to air. Although his physical presence is no longer with us, his remarkable legacy and invaluable contributions to the military working dog program will forever endure. Monty's passion, expertise, and commitment have left

an indelible mark on the history and development of the program, ensuring that his impact continues to be felt by future generations.

The War Dogs Podcast offers an extraordinary opportunity to listen to the captivating history of the military working dog program across various branches of the armed forces. I feel it is crucial to preserve this war's history to prevent future generations of handlers from forgetting the sacrifices, successes, and difficulties they overcame. By documenting these recollections, we produce a timeless artifact that will speak to both present and future handlers, as well as military history buffs and animal lovers alike.

I invite all those who have their own stories, experiences, or unique perspectives to reach out to me without hesitation. Your voice deserves to be heard, and your contribution is vital in completing the tapestry of the military working dog program's rich legacy.

Editor's Note: Hear War Dogs Podcast on Spotify
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/5HPAvSWneUyhyNZ2kYn8K5?si=SLKazjunTr-PVw3mxbvNw>.

Getting Caught with Your Pants Down

By Steve Terry

I was a Sentry Dog handler with the 212th MP Company stationed in Vinh Long. As anyone stationed in Vietnam will recall, we were required to take malaria pills, which had a side effect of giving you the runs. I was working a perimeter post on the airfield one night when I felt the need to go. So I had my dog sit and I started to take off all the equipment we wore; the steel pot, the flack vest, web belt with two canteens...I think you get the picture.

I dropped my pants and positioned myself to do my business when a Huey came in to land. The pilot saw my dilemma and immediately stopped and hovered directly over me and turned on all of his landing lights! My dog went nuts and started to run circles around me, wrapping my legs in the leash and pulling me to the ground.

With my dignity gone I could do nothing but clean myself up and carry on walking my post. I am sure that Huey crew has told the story as many times as I have.

The Tip of the Spear; A War Dog Story

Editor's Note: This is the eighth installment of a multi-part story. It details his journey from college to Vietnam and his scout dog Skipper (X268). In this episode, he takes his new dog to the field.

By Vernon J. Roman

Scout Dog Handler

Skipper turned out to be above-average in training. We were previously trained to work our dogs on-leash. If the dog made a mistake or the handler missed the alert, being that close together most likely meant that injury or death would occur to both.

What a bonus. Skipper was trained to work off-leash. I received an extra few days of training learning hand signals and how to work with a silent whistle. I could send Skipper way out in front of me and direct him to check out areas of concern. If he messed up, being that far away from me, it raised my survival rate much higher. A mistake had less of a chance of taking me out along with him and gave me at least more elbow room to react. That extra dimension made us by far the strongest dog team in I Corp and maybe in Vietnam. The off leash component was a big upgrade from the average dog (No Ego here). Frankly, I was pleased that I was, also, a top drawer dog handler because the dog is only as good as the handler and vice versa. We were the best you could get.

Somewhere, there are numbers stating how many men it takes in the rear to support the soldier in the field. I believe it's in the area of 10 to 15 support people required to support one field soldier: the *Spear* or the 1% of us that go into the field and face potential combat situations.

The dog team not only is a part of the Spear, but, we are the *tip* of the Spear. There is nothing in front of us but...and that is always the question. What's in front of us and will it hurt.

Our very first step is a risk. We can step on a mine, we can step into a bungee pit, we can trip a trip wire, we can walk into an ambush, we can be shot standing right at our starting point by a sniper looking to collect on the bounty for killing a dog and his handler. The point man/dog team are out in front, and you cannot be more exposed. You have no idea how many eyes are looking at you, or, how many dangers are lurking down that path.

There might as well be a big bulls eye on your chest. Every time the Dog Team leads off, we are, in fact, taunting our enemy saying, "we are here, shoot if you dare, but, we're coming to get you."

Considering a normal person does not want to die, the dog handler has to do considerable compartmentalizing, or there is no way he is going to ever be able to take that first step. You're the most vulnerable person on the patrol.

In fact, there were handlers so terrified to go to the field that they would sabotage their dog, or whatever, to avoid going, or to get themselves sent back to base early. I saw one handler fall into drugs so bad that he had the shakes until he could get his hand on a joint. He did get himself a medical that kept him out of the field.

You never forget you're *first* mission. My first mission to the field was with the infantry. A supervisor from our camp also came on the mission to make sure the new dog handler knows what he is doing. As far as I know, my shadow did not need to stay with me more than the first day to see that Skipper and I were a solid team right from the get go. He did not remain in the field with me after day one.

Being it's the first mission, I am not sure that registers with your brain right away that this is the real thing. I drew a dandy for my first mission. Our job was to find and make contact with the enemy, and we made no effort to hide where we were. I was put at the head of this trail that was as well-worn as any trail you would walk in one of your state parks. My orders were simple....*follow the trail.*

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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, 105 W. "F" Street, Suite 206, San Diego, CA 92101 (include a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want them returned).

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My Journey from College to Dog Handler

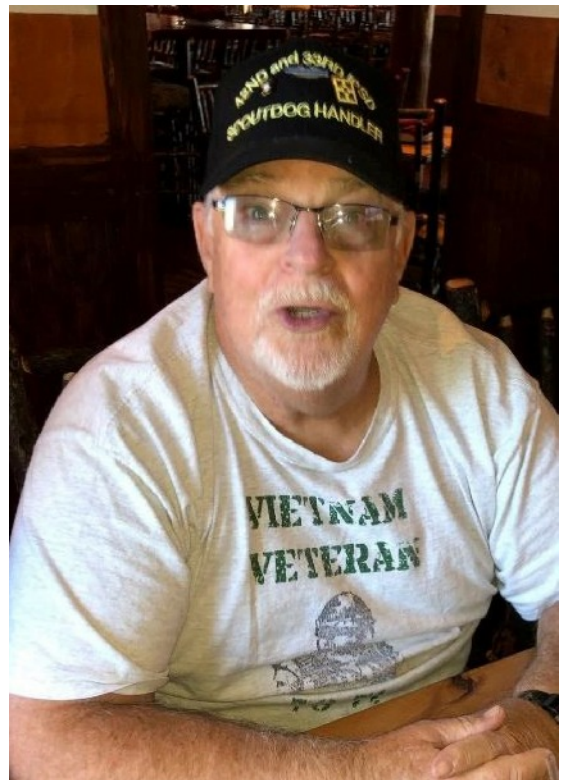
By Jack Kowall

In the summer of 1969, I received my grades for the Spring Trimester at California State College and was notified that I was NPR (Not Permitted to Register) for the next trimester of school. Knowing that my overall GPA was high enough, all I had to do was ask, and I would be readmitted in the fall. Not to worry right? Wrong! I lost my deferment, and the draft board was notified. So, I got drafted, and was inducted into the U.S. Army on Sept. 9, 1969. I became Private Kowall.

If anybody remembers, I went on the last call-up before the Lottery took effect. When they began drawing numbers ... mine was 289. I would never have

extend, and they made me a Squad Leader in Advance Infantry Training (AIT). I got a private room. All I did was stand at the end of the line in formation. Graduation followed, and a lot of troops were sent to Vietnam and other places, while a lot went on to other jobs. Me? I was lucky; I was put on a bus with about 15 other troops and sent to Fort Benning, Georgia, for Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) School.

I got there about 0300-hrs and was sent to bed. When we got up in the morning, I was told the class I was in was full. Not to worry... I was to be a company clerk, and wait for the next class to start. Great, right? The catch was, when you complete NCO school, you



been drafted. Too late. I was already in the Army.

At Fort Jackson in Columbia, SC, I arrived at the Reception Center, where you are tested, and told how great thou art. I was offered all the different kinds of training. I remember being told that I could go to any school the Army had; it was just a matter of how much time I wanted to extend my draft status. Being the agreeable person I am, I declined all of it and said, "I just want to get out as quickly as I can."

Next, I went on to basic training. When that was completed, I was sent to LPC (Leadership Preparation Course). It was only three weeks, so I didn't have to

must have at least one year left to go in your Army service contract. Being one month short of the time necessary, I was told I could extend for the time I needed. I thought about it, and decided not to spend more time than my current commitment. So, I was sent to a casual company to await new orders.

I was again interviewed, and offered training, and as usual, more time in the Army was required; for everything! So, I asked the interviewer if there was a school that I could get into that didn't require any more time for me? He answered, "sit tight," and walked away.

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VP Report: The Meaning of Memorial Day

By Ernie Ayala
VDHA Vice President

Memorial Day was just celebrated by thousands of Americans traveling across the country or just welcoming summer with a BBQ and beer in the backyard with family and friends. What is the real meaning of Memorial Day? I know I get many “thank you for your service” comments while out at the mall or the grocery store while wearing my Vietnam hat. A lot of people don’t realize it is the day we remember those who sacrificed their lives for our country (not for the veterans or veterans who have passed away, that’s Veterans Day, celebrated on November 11th).

There is one soldier I pay homage to on Memorial Day, even though I never met him because he died before I was born. His name is Sgt. Matias V. Ayala, squad leader, 289th Infantry Regiment, 75th Army Division. He was just 19 years old and thought he was in a relatively safe war zone in Holland. He led his squad through a forest and all of the sudden a burst of machine gun fire ended the war for him. Hopefully, he never knew what hit him.

That’s the thing about war. It’s just not fair. My dad was in San Francisco’s Presidio going through truck mechanics school for the Marines before being shipped off to Iwo Jima and I would have been born in San Francisco. Instead, he got emergency leave to see his mom in Los Angeles and our family moved there to be with my grandma, who took the loss of her baby really bad.

Not fair, because exactly one month later, the war was over in Europe and the Nazis surrendered. Not fair, because even before the war ended, most of the Nazis still fighting were old men and Nazi youth. They were pretty quick to drop their weapons and surrender to us. They knew it made no sense to continue the hopeless war. No my brothers, war is never fair. It can strike anyone, anytime, anywhere.

The guys who killed my uncle were young Nazis, eager to get their feet wet in battle. That was their last battle as my uncle’s buddies wiped them off the face of this earth. Now, my uncle has an angel watching over his grave at the Margraten American Cemetery in Holland. Air Force retired sergeant Jesse Bustamante married a beautiful Dutch girl while stationed at Soesterberg Air Force Base in the Netherlands. He is a volunteer at the American Military Cemetery in Holland and he makes sure my uncle’s grave site is clean at all



times. He washes his cross so it is in spotless condition. He emailed me a message on Memorial Day introducing me to the cemetery personnel who work around the clock assuring our heroes are respected.

My grandparents sent their youngest boy to war but never got to see him return. My brother David was the only one in our family to actually see the cemetery and his grave site when he was in the Army in 1955.

To all my brothers who lost loved ones in any war, I salute you. It is something you live with and must respect every day, especially on Memorial Day.



My Journey from College to Dog Handler

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When he returned, he said there was a Scout Dog School starting on Monday, and I could get in. I became a Scout Dog Handler at that time, and later found out what I had done. I had signed up to be a point man in Vietnam.

In Vietnam, I was part of a 30-man Platoon. We were usually led by a lieutenant and/or a platoon sergeant. Our sergeant was an E-7, and we would rarely see each other. Our job was to go out with a line company in the field, and as they moved, we would walk point and lead the way. We would usually go out on a supply chopper and return 3-5 days later on the next supply run. I have many stories to tell on those missions.

My dog's name was Eric. Eric was an all-black Shepherd and Lab mix. He was a wonderful dog, whom I'm sorry to say, I've not been able to find out his fate. When I left Vietnam, Eric was assigned to another handler, and continued his job as a true hero. We spent almost an entire year walking the trails of Vietnam, and I returned home with not a scratch. At night, we would camp on a hill and put claymore mines on the trails leading to our site.

One night I was awakened by the sound of one of the claymores going off. It scared the shit out of me. Next thing I know, everyone is firing rounds into the dark and then. A few grenades were thrown. No one thought they might bounce off a tree and come back. In the morning nothing was found at the site; no remains, no blood, nothing. Guess we got lucky.

I always had someone walk my slack, (watch my six/back), as I was watching my dog. One day, as I was walking, the guy behind me was carrying a LAW (Grenade Launcher), with a grenade in it. Luckily, because if he would have had a shot gun shell instead, I would not be writing this today. I heard a thump as the launcher went off and then felt a swish by my ear. I still think it nicked me. He said a twig had hit his trigger and it went off. The shell hit a tree about 10 yards up and fell to the ground. I asked for a different slack man.

I guess you can say I achieved my goal. In July 1971, my tour was up and I returned to the States. I only had two months left to fulfill my two-year obligation, so I was honorably discharged. I only spent 22 months in the Army.

As I look back, if I knew then what I know now, I may have done things a little differently.

Scout Dog Handlers Needed

By Norm Ream

Mark Kaufman, Kennel Master at Ft. Lewis, WA is looking for some Scout Dog handlers to come to Ft. Lewis and talk about their time in Nam. Last Year he had some Trackers come up and talk about the use of Tracker Teams in Nam.

Anyone interested can contact him at 717-275-4186 or email markkaufmann275@yahoo.com. He mentioned that there could possibly be help with meals and lodging.

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DEADLINE

ARTICLES FOR
THE
SEPTEMBER
ISSUE MUST BE
SUBMITTED BY

AUGUST 23

The Tip of the Spear; A War Dog Story

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We started this patrol at day break, and, it did not end until it was dark. When you lead a patrol, you have all your concentration/focus on everything in front of you. I have often said, if the soldier behind me stopped or changed direction on me, and did not tell me, I never would have known it. My full attention was on what's in front of me.

For this first trip out, I only worked Skipper on leash. I challenge you to concentrate on something and not have your mind wander off to something else. A handler does not have the luxury to lose focus. Skipper and I followed that trail for hours, stopping only once for a lunch break. At that time, I took Skipper and moved back into the group for protection. I had C-rations for lunch, rested, and watered Skipper. His conditioning really showed on this patrol. We did not need to make frequent water breaks despite the heat. Needless to say, we continued to follow this trail the balance of the day. My biggest concern was if Skipper was really staying focused or if he was just being a dog out for a walk. I would periodically give him a special look or nod, exchange eye contact, and I felt he was engaged. Fortunately, there was nothing to be concerned with during that patrol.

From the start, I made it a practice not to know anyone I was working with in the field. On that first patrol, and all the rest, I never bothered or wanted to know who was stepping up to act as my body guard and was the conveyer of messages. As I said before, behind me did not exist.

Toward nightfall, we broke out into a very big field of ankle high grass. It was really strange. We stopped. Skipper and I were now done with one very, very, long day. The soldiers immediately spread out. A perimeter was established, claymores put out, and trip wires with flares set up. This is where we were spending the night.

The actual spot Skipper and I stopped was where we took root. I took off all my gear, got out the air mattress and the poncho liner, fed and watered Skipper, and had more of the C rations I was carrying. In about an hour, it was dark, and I was lying on that air mattress with Skipper beside me staring up at a very clear sky just filled with stars. Skipper remained on the leash which I secured around my wrist. There was, and would always be, plenty of space around me. Even though it was not stated, the soldiers kept their distance. They did not want to ruin the day by getting bit by a dog guarding its handler.

Day One was now in the books. So, now what? I settled in for the night. (What I did that first night I never did again). Now that I had survived my first patrol, what about all those crawly critters in the grass around me? What was going to bite me, sting me, or eat me? Maybe the enemy would find a way through our perimeter. My mind raced. I made sure my cuffs were tucked in. I buttoned my shirt at the neck. I created a little nest in my poncho liner trying to keep as many things as possible from getting to me. I really did not want to be anyone's meal.

Continued in the next issue.

Treasurer's Report

CHECKING	\$34,206.93
SAVINGS	<u>5,081.75</u>
TOTAL	\$39,288.68

REMINDERS and INFORMATION:

Checks are always to be made payable to VDHA no matter if the funds are for dues or merchandise. Our bank will not accept third party checks.

PayPal payments for dues and/or merchandise purchases must be made from your personal PayPal account.

Dues: PayPal payments are to be sent to vdhapaypal@vdha.us.

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Flight to Honor # 8

*By Stephen Terry
212th MP Company, Sentry Dogs
Vinh Long 70-71*

On April 25th I had the honor to be chosen as a member of Flight to Honor #8 out of Polk County, Florida. I was one of 87 veterans accompanied by 87 guardians to make the flight to Washington, D.C. to spend time at the World War II Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, the Vietnam War Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery.

To make this day even more special, I had the privilege of having my son as my guardian. I had two tasks that I wanted to accomplish during the visit to D.C., the first was to leave a tribute to my military working dog Sergeant 25X1 at the Wall, and the second was to introduce my son to a good friend killed in Vietnam who is buried at Arlington.

The tribute that I left at the Wall below, and although it mentions my dog specifically, it was intended to honor all the dogs that walked at our sides while we were in country. Leaving this memory at the Wall gave me a sense of closure for my time in Vietnam, and for the sense of loss I have felt over the years for the way our partners were treated when the military pulled out.

If you have not made an Honor Flight yet you need to put it on your bucket list. Give yourself the treat of being welcomed home the way you should have been back in the day.



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

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Upcoming Events

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| July 15, 2023: | 25th Anniversary Dedication of the War Dog Memorial at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. (More details https://mwdheritagemuseum.org/Events/) |
| Sept 10-16, 2023 | 41st Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion at Howard County Healing Field
8313 East 400
South Greentown, IN |
| October 27, 2023 | A commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the Military Working Dog Teams National Monument— Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, TX |

*Have a
Great Summer*