



DOGMAN



A Brotherhood of All Combat Veteran Dog Handlers

VIETNAM DOG HANDLER ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 30 - NUMBER 3 - SEPTEMBER 2023

2024 Reunion in Reno Pin Contest Announced

By John R. Harvey

You can compete in designing a pin for this year's VDHA Reunion in Reno. The VDHA has formed a Reunion Pin Design Committee consisting of four member judges: Norm Ream (Chairman non-voting), Bill Cummings (voting), Lynn Mastin (voting) and Tim Hennessey (voting).

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

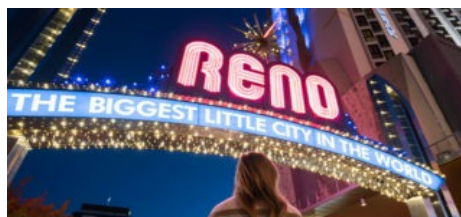
Past pin designs (pictured) have incorporated the reunion location and location-related art, the year and "VDHA Reunion." For on-line entries via e-mail, please use acceptable formats, i.e., JPG, TIFF, PDF, or BMP. Send on-line entries to nream@aol.com. Please put "VDHA Pin Contest" in the subject line so your entry does not go to spam.

Make sure you let us know who you are so we are not dependent on your e-mail address only. We will assign a contestant number for voting. For snail mail entries, please send to VDHA Pin Contest,

Attention: Norm Ream, 336 Camino De Las Flores, Encinitas, CA 92024.

Entries will be electronically scanned and sent to the judges. Again, make sure you include your name with your entry. The deadline for a design to be considered is December 31, 2023.

The winning entry will be announced as soon as possible.



From the President

By John R. Harvey
VDHA President

I want to start by thanking Bob and Deb Palochik for their dedication and hard work in organizing our 2024 reunion. We will be meeting in Reno Nevada, aka "The Biggest Little City in the World." Reno is alive with lots of restaurants and shows. Our venue is right downtown and within walking distance of many attractions.

We are not getting any younger. Only God knows how many more opportunities we will have to share our comradery with our VDHA family. If you can make it, please get your reservations in early.

I also wanted to bring to your attention the ten-year rededication ceremony for the War Dog Memorial at Lackland Air Force Base, which is going to be held on October 27, 2023. We have provided the itinerary and other information in this edition of *Dogman*. If you plan on attending and would like to be an official representa-

tive of the VDHA please contact me at 860-796-7813 or at jrhcpa@hhcpas.com.

For those of you who cannot make the ceremony but have the trip on you bucket list, you can contact Chris Dion (USAF retired) an advisor to the Airman Heritage Foundation for information regarding access and tours. His contact number is 210-439-0552.

Additionally, my deepest sense of gratitude goes out to Steve Lemish the editor of our *Dogman*. He has performed a wonderful service to our organization. Please, if you would like to share your experiences in Vietnam, or your relationship with your K-9 comrades, or any of life's lessons that you have learned along the way, consider writing an article for *Dogman*. Steve is always looking for pictures and content to share with the VDHA family.

Welcome Home.

Vietnam Redux

By Steve Reichenback
VDHA Member

It didn't start off as a trip to Vietnam, I had never really thought about a return trip, but I suddenly realized that I was about to lose five free nights in a Marriott if I didn't use them real soon. As long as I was using my Marriott points up, I figured I might as well use up some of the others and pull together a points trip.

I did it all in about three weeks and it came out pretty good with some new and some old destinations. After doing some preliminary flight research and realizing that Vietnam was a good starting point for international flights from Miami, I modified my trip and added Hanoi, Da Nang, Hue and Ho Chi Minh City (if you live in Hanoi; it's still "Saigon" if you live there).

The first stop was Doha, 14 flying hours from Miami. I had an 8 hour layover in Doha so I took a city tour, a neat place, like a mini Dubai. Of course the airport is very modern with all kinds of upscale shopping including a gold store. The tour guide said there were 4 no's for Qatar, no taxes, no homeless, no thievery, no criminals.

The next stop was Hanoi after a 7 hour flight. HaHa I stayed at The Hilton Garden Inn (on points of course) with a capital G, not the infamous Hoa Lo Prison,
Continued on Page 9.



Above: April 29, 1975: Evacuees climbed a ladder to a U.S. helicopter on top of a downtown Saigon building.

Right: 2023 - The original building was kept, but now it is surrounded by newer, taller buildings in downtown Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.



Welcome to Reno, NV

2024 VDHA Reunion Agenda

Registration

HALL OUTSIDE HOSPITALITY ROOM
SILVER BARON ROOMS "D&E"
MEZZANINE LOBBY FLOOR

The VDHA Reunion Registration will open
8:00 am Monday, April 29th & Tuesday, April 30th
8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday April 29th
(closed for lunch 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm)
8 am – 4:00 pm on Tuesday, April 30th
(closed for lunch 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm)

Your registration envelope will include:

BADGE(S) * REUNION PIN(S) * PRINTED AGENDA
GROUP EVENT TICKET(S) TO 'MAGIQUE PRODUCTION' * 7-DAY RTC BUS PASS(ES)

(7-day RTC pass is for your use to get around Reno and getting to

'The Theatre' Tuesday, April 30th, where the 'MAGIQUE PRODUCTION' (group event) will be held.)

AIRPORT SHUTTLE

Daily 5:00am – 11:45pm runs every half hour

Proceed to the baggage claim area and follow the signage directing you to the general airport shuttle area to board the Silver Legacy shuttle.

The shuttle stops along the curb, outside the D Doors located North of Baggage Claim, to pick up passengers. The shuttle arrives 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after the hour.

Hotel Information

The reunion is scheduled from
Monday, April 29th to Wednesday, May 1st, 2024

SILVER LEGACY RESORT CASINO

407 N. VIRGINIA ST., RENO NV 89501 / 800-455-4770



Reservations can now be made by calling the **Silver Legacy Resort Casino – 800-455-4770**
(follow the prompts 1 – 3 – 1 or 2 – 1)

You **MUST** provide the following information to receive the group rate
(There are a limited number of blocked group room rates - you may want to make reservation(s) ASAP)

GROUP CODE: **SRVDH4 – VIETNAM DOG HANDLER ASSOCIATION**

OR online at

<https://book.passkey.com/go/SRVDH4>

Hotel Information (Cont.)

Rate \$99/night Monday April 29th, 30th and May 1st
(includes fees and taxes)

DOES NOT include breakfast.

Each guest is required to provide a credit card guarantee to make reservation(s)

PLEASE NOTE: Hotel reservation cut-off date is MARCH 29, 2024

Reservations made after March 29th will not guarantee blocked room rate.

**Please remember to request/book a handicapped room
(if needed) at the time you make your reservation(s).**

HOSPITALITY ROOM – SILVER BARON ROOMS “D&E”

MEZZANINE LOBBY FLOOR

Hospitality room will be open Monday, April 29TH 9:00 am–11:00 pm
Tuesday, April 30TH (after the general membership meeting) from 10:00 am–11:00 pm
Wednesday, May 1st from 8:00 am–**2:00 pm**
(Buffet will be held in this room Wednesday, May 1st at 6:00 pm)

VDHA BX – SILVER BARON ROOM “C”

MEZZANINE LOBBY FLOOR

MIKE HURDER, MANAGER

VDHA BX will be open
8:00 am - Monday, April 29th
10:00 am - Tuesday, April 30th (after general membership meeting)
8:00 am - Wednesday, May 1st

**BX will close Monday and Tuesday at 6:00 pm
Wednesday at **2:00 pm****

The BX will stay open with **these exceptions:**

#1 - 12:00 pm-1:00 pm for lunch on Monday, April 29th and Tuesday April 30th

#2 - Select times when minimal BX sales do not support keeping the BX open (in this event, a sign will be posted as to when the BX will re-open)

#4 - **2:00 pm on Wednesday, May 1st**
shutting down to transport the BX merchandise back to the BX in California.

Do not delay!

Visit the BX early. The longer you wait,
better the chances will be that the item(s) you want may be sold out and
you will have to wait to have your item(s) mailed to you after the reunion.

50/50 RAFFLE

Wednesday, May 1st during the open cash bar
6:30 pm – 6:55 pm before buffet is served.

Tickets can be purchased at registration area during operating hours
and any time throughout the reunion by seeing
Bob or Debbie Palochik or the appointed ticket salesperson(s)

*** * * TICKETS ARE \$1.00/ea. or 6/\$5.00 * * ***

**Raffle will be conducted by first pulling 5 tickets
From those 5 tickets, 2 tickets will be pulled
The winner will be pulled from the final 2 tickets**

Officer's Meeting

Monday, April 29, 2024, 3:00PM
Officers will be notified of location

**General Membership Meeting**
Active VDHA Members Only

Silver Baron Room – (hospitality room)
Tuesday, April 30, 2024, 9:00-10:00 am

GROUP EVENT

Tuesday, April 30th – 8:00 pm
The Theatre – 505 Keystone Ave., Reno NV 89503
1 mile from the Silver Legacy Casino

**YOUR REGISTRATION PACKET WILL INCLUDE YOUR SHOW TICKET
IF YOU SIGNED UP TO ATTEND THE EVENT
ALONG WITH YOUR RTC BUS PASS YOU CAN USE TO GET TO THE EVENT
OR YOU CAN WALK THE 1 MILE IF YOU WANT/CAN**

'Magique Production'

GROUP EVENT (Cont.)

'Magique Production' is an award-winning resident "show of the year!" featuring 20 illusions, 100+ costumes, and an epic soundtrack and razzmatazz! Great magic and illusions. Up front and personal in an intimate theatre. (Ticket(s) are limited to first come first served basis).

Silver Legacy Resort Casino Western Buffet Dinner Silver Baron Room

Wednesday May 1st 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Open cash bar 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm



Seasonal Tossed Green Salad

Ranch, Thousand Island,

White Cheddar Macaroni and Cheese

Bacon, Crisp Panko Topping

Three Bean Salad

Red Onion, Peppers, Cilantro, Cumin

Western Fried Potatoes

Tangy Cole Slaw

Celery Seed, Onion, Parsley

Seasonal Fresh Vegetables

Freshly Baked Rolls

Red Potato Salad

Peppered Corn Muffins

Cheesecake

Tomato, Cucumber and Watermelon Salad

Fresh Mint Vinaigrette

Jack Daniel's Pecan Pie

Marinated Chicken Breast

Apple Pie

Roast Pork Loin

Pan Gravy, Apple-Cinnamon Topping

Banana Cream Pie

Pan-Seared Salmon

Lemon-Basil Beurre Blanc

Chocolate Fudge Cake

Prime Rib Carving Station

Rosemary, Cabernet Jus, Creamed Horseradish

2024 REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

DATE	EVENT	COST/pp	# ATTENDING	TOTAL
	Reunion Registration Fee - includes 7-day RTC bus pass	\$70		
TUES-04/30	Magique Performance	\$45		
WED-05/01	Western Buffet (6:00 pm Cash Bar / 7:00 pm Dinner)	\$84		
				TOTAL DUE \$
NAME (as you want it on badge)				
VDHA Member Number		UNIT		
SPOUSE name (If attending)				
GUEST name (if attending)				
Street Address (member)				
City		State	Zip	
EMAIL ADDRESS (Required for Confirmation)				
MEMBER phone #		EMERGENCY phone #		
NOTE: Only ACTIVE VDHA MEMBERS will have access to the General Membership Meeting. You will be notified if your membership is NOT ACTIVE when your registration form is received.				

Complete registration form, print it and mail it, along with your check/money order to:
VDHA, c/o Bob Palochik, Treasurer, 10125 Skye Saddle Ave., Las Vegas NV 89166-6546

CHECK/MO MUST BE MADE PAYABLE TO VDHA

NO PAYPAL OR CREDIT CARD payments accepted for Registration

Completed registration and payment are due **ABSOLUTELY NO LATER THAN MARCH 31, 2024**

Cancellation (with refund) will be accepted up to and including March 31, 2024

If you need to add/cancel/modify your registration or have any questions, please email Bob Palochik at bobpalochik@vdha.us or call 702.557.3538 or 702.845.2944

INDIVIDUAL HOTEL RESERVATIONS FOR THE SILVER LEGACY RESORT CASINO

CAN BE MADE BY CALLING

1-800-455-4770

(FOLLOW PROMPTS 1 - 3 - 1 or 2 - 1)

YOU MUST reference GROUP CODE **SRVDH4**

OR on line at

<https://book.passkey.com/go/SRVDH4>

CUTOFF DATE FOR HOTEL RESERVATIONS IS MARCH 29, 2024

GROUP RATE NOT GUARANTEED AFTER THIS DATE

*\$99/night
Monday, April 29/Tuesday, April 30/
Wednesday, May 1
(includes fees and taxes
DOES NOT INCLUDE BREAKFAST*

WILL YOU BE STAYING AT THE SILVER LEGACY RESORT CASINO WHERE THE REUNION WILL BE HELD?

YES ☐

If yes, how many nights

NO ☐

SEE "AGENDA" FOR SPECIFICS ON MAGIQUE PERFORMANCE AND WESTERN BUFFET MENU

DATE RECEIVED: _____

CHECK#/MO#: _____

AMOUNT RECD: _____

The Tip of the Spear; A War Dog Story

Editor's Note: This is the ninth installment of a multi-part story. It details his journey from college to Vietnam and his scout dog Skipper (X268). Having survived his first day in the bush, this episode begins on his first night out in the field.

By Vernon J. Roman

Scout Dog Handler

Lying on that mattress, with Skipper nice and close, I stared at those stars and had a long conversation with the Lord. There was no way that I was going to be able to stay awake all night, and besides, after that all day walk, I was tired. I was going to have to shut my eyes and *HOPE* and *TRUST* in the LORD that I would get to open them again.

The Lord has always spoken to me, and, I have been really blessed in that department. I knew I had to trust in Him to protect me and that worry was just wasted energy. Just do your job and trust in the Lord to protect you. He gave me Skipper.

This first night set the tone for the balance of my tour. From that point on, I was not concerned about being killed and went about doing things as if I were in the states just that someone, on occasion, may shoot at me. That can even happen in the states. In any event, I took the avenue that whatever happens will happen. I am just not going to think about it or acknowledge the danger I was facing.

I do not think it's was pure luck that protected us, but Gods intervention that spared us some of the drama that was being experienced by the platoon we were about to join as well as the soldiers currently in the field.

Our platoon and the soldiers in the field had taken a beating resulting in the many body bags we had seen as well as the death of two dog handlers. But, the three of us were spared all that drama by about a week. Never, during our collective tours, did the enemy ever launch a major offensive. Thus, all three of us were able to avoid the experiences that came with it.

All our encounters we experience were on a much smaller scale, just as deadly, but smaller. That was God's way of helping us out.

My first week was just a repeat of day one, with zero encounters with the enemy, with booby traps, or the finding of any enemy caches. Skipper and I got plenty of work time and we were old hands by the end of the week.

As the week wound up, I really appreciated the fact that I got to go back to base camp. I was able to shave,

shower, get all clean clothes, and go to the mess hall for hot meals. On top of that, I also got down time in the clubhouse, and, those ice cold Cokes were waiting.

Those infantry soldiers, I was with, were already out in the field 30 days. They would have been grateful for a pair of clean socks, let alone a shower and a clean uniform. We did get a couple of hot meals helicoptered to us during my week with them, but that's not the same as being able to be back at base. Skipper and I were happy to hop the helicopter at the end of our time, and I did feel sorry for those infantry guys who were going to be staying out in the field.

Ranking high, up on that list of FIRSTS, would definitely be SKIPPER'S and my FIRST ALERT. Very early, during the first few weeks at base camp, I watched a ceremony where about six Dog Handlers all received their Combat Infantry Badges. I do remember wondering, how long would it take to earn that medal myself? Not to worry, it was not going to take all that long.

It had to be our second or third mission. It was very early on in my tour. It really set up Skipper's and my reputation and put us in the lime light. When something exceptional happens, word spreads very quickly through the field. The soldiers know who the bad or mediocre

Continued on Page 13.

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).

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

VIETNAM: REDUX - Then and Now

Continued from Page 2.

Aka "The Hanoi Hilton." I did drive by Hoa Lo Prison but I did not go in, too many articles about how it shows how well treated the American POWs were treated. I spent 3 days in Hanoi, a city of 5 million people and 5.6 million motorbikes. My timing was perfect, they had a 3 day Reunification Day holiday celebrating the fall of Saigon going on and a lot of streets were closed for pedestrian traffic only.

They were very family oriented and the kids were everywhere having a ball with no alcohol in sight. I took in the Museum of Ethnology which showcased the 54 ethnic groups that live in Vietnam and it too was filled with Kids and their parents. I visited the Temple of Literature built in 1070 and dedicated to Confucius, it was the first University in Vietnam.

There were quite a diverse architectural styles; ancient Chinese temples and buildings and French apartment houses. I had lunch at the noodle shop where Obama and Bourdain dined. I visited the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum Complex and there was no mistaking the reverence the people have for the father of their country. A truly great patriot.

Then it was back to Da Nang. I didn't recognize anything. There were plenty of new high rises, new bridges and a new airport. I stayed at the beautiful Hilton Hotel (on points of course), not Da Nang's Dogpatch. I tried to get out to Hill 327 (aka Freedom Hill) but it is now a firing range for the Vietnamese Army and is off limits. Marble Mountain, Hoi An and China Beach made for an interesting day. The only thing familiar about Marble Mountain were the mountains themselves. They used to be separated from Da Nang and had nothing but open ground between them and Hoi An, now everywhere is built up and populated. It should not have surprised me, Port St. Lucie, FL, where I live has certainly changed since 1966.

The remains of the Marble Mountain Air Facility were standing but abandoned and totally surrounded by new buildings. There used to be small hills South of the mountains but they were all gone. A couple of small rice paddies with their water buffalo still exist but most have been converted to housing, hotels, a golf course, etc. There was great shopping for everything imaginable at Marble Mountain. Additionally, they ship all over the world.

My first visit to the ancient city of Hoi An, which dates back to the 15th century, is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It's a bustling shopping town

closed to cars and South of Marble Mountain. A shoppers paradise, it has everything from custom made silk shirts to cheap souvenirs, leather shops, jewelry stores, open air butchers, and all types of restaurants. You could wander the narrow streets for hours.

Da Nang to Hue via the Hai Vân Pass is a beautiful ride North out of Da Nang on National Route 1. At one time it was the only road North and handled all the truck convoys running supplies to northern I Corps, but the Hai Vân Tunnel, the longest tunnel in Southeast Asia (3.9 miles) was opened in 2005 and now leaves the pass free to tourists and motorbikes.

Hue, home of the Imperial City, was the national capital from 1802 to 1945. The site of some of the fiercest fighting of the Vietnam War in 1968. It was an interesting place to wander around. I have read a lot about it, but to be there on the Perfume River and wander among the walls and buildings was a very solemn experience.

We took a drive through history from Hue to the Phong Nha Cave and back. We started North on "The Street Without Joy," on Route 1 between Hue and Quang Tri. In Dong Ha we drove over what used to be a dirt airfield that was heavily used during Operation Hastings in 1966, but is now a major city block. We then went West onto Route 9 which continues to Khe Sanh and Laos. After a few miles we turned North again onto the now paved Ho Chi Minh Trail. It is a major route and is paved its whole length.

The Phong Nha Cave, which was only discovered in 1994, is huge. It has 30 miles of passageways which have been explored but you can only go in about a mile via boat (the river is about 9 miles long) then you walk out on man-made paths. British divers first explored it in 2008 so I am sure there is much more to discover.

Saigon, or now Ho Chi Minh City, is a bustling city of 9 million people and 7 million motorbikes. The government might be communist, but the people are capitalists. Wide tree-lined streets and many park-like areas make it a picturesque if not hustling city.

We had cocktails at the Rex Hotel Rooftop Bar, home of the "5:00 o'clock folles," where the U.S. government would lie daily to the press about the progress of the war. Some things never change, the subject matter is different but the lies remain. Where is Walter Cronkite?

I left Vietnam for the second time, 56 years to the day after my discharge. At least this time I walked out.

To be continued...

Treasurer's Report

CHECKING \$35,911.72

SAVINGS 5,082.25

TOTAL \$40,993.97

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. Please include member name and/or member number in NOTE area in PayPal.

Merchandise: PayPal payments are to be sent to merchandisepaypal@vdha.us.

Remember, if paying for merchandise through your personal PayPal account, your completed order form must be emailed to our BX Manager, Mike Hurder, at Bxmgr@vdha.us for completion.

LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING EVERYONE AT THE RENO REUNION IN APRIL, 2024



OCTOBER 27, 2023
TIMELINE OF EVENTS
US Military Working Dog
Teams National
Monument

1000-1100
EVENT 1
Canine demo,
meet and greet,
information tables

Ceremony 1100-1200
EVENT 2

1200-1300
EVENT 3
Reception hosted by
Rocky Mountain
Dawgs Project
"Feed the Dawgs."

CEREMONY:
WELCOME
PRESENTATION OF COLORS BY 341 TRS JOINT SERVICE HONOR
GUARD
NATIONAL ANTHEM BY MR. DAVID MAIN
INVOCATION BY MR. PATRICK YEOMAN (TSA)
WELCOME & INTRODUCTION OF DVS/VIPS
COMMENTS BY 502 ABW CC
COMMENTS FROM CHIEF US ARMY VETERINARY CORPS
"GUARDIANS OF THE NIGHT" READ BY KM/TRAINER STUDENT
KEYNOTE SPEAKER, MSGT JOHN BURNAM, US ARMY
(RETIRED)
CUTTING OF THE ANNIVERSARY CAKE (JOHN BURNAM & HC
STUDENT)
PLAYING OF SERVICE MEDLEY BY BAND OF THE WEST

Please note: BSA-Lackland is a closed installation requiring approved military ID in order to gain access.

If you wish to attend this event, but do not have a military ID, you will need to contact Chris Dion at k9dion71@gmail.com and provide the required information no later than Sept. 15. A background check will be completed and your name will be added to the event entry authority list. *Poster courtesy of Paw Print and Military Working Dog Heritage Museum.*

Seeking VDHA Warrior's Medal of Valor Nominees

By John Harvey
VDHA President

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

as the official medal for presentation for all tribes desiring to use the medal to pay tribute to and honor all veterans and current military personnel regardless of their cultural background.

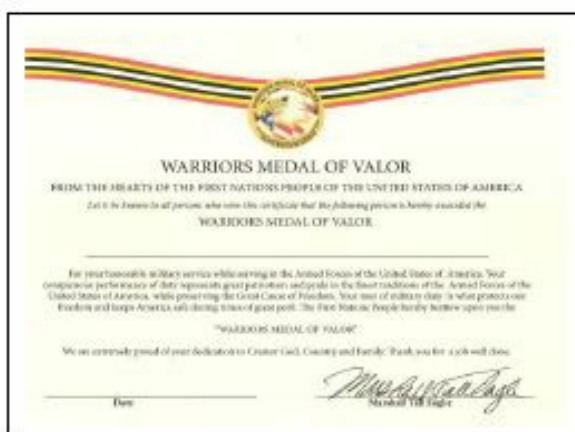
In 2011, John Homa presented the idea to then-President Fred Door and members attending the Orlando Reunion (see Warrior's Medal of Valor Recipient (vdha.us) on the VDHA web site for a complete background). Through discussions with Marshall Tall Eagle's family and purchases of the medals, the

Vernon Anderson, Karl Goss and Perry Money. You can see their nomination text at <http://www.vdha.us/content29520.html>

Bob Palochik received the medal in 2022 you can see his nomination in the June 2022 *Dogman*.

VDHA nomination criteria:

1. Nominees should be current members of the VDHA and meet at least one or more of the following:
2. The Warrior's Medal is awarded for valor, for an action or



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

The award was originally created by Native American Marshall Tall Eagle Serna of Woodburn, OR. Marshall Tall Eagle is a Vietnam veteran who served for 14 years in the Army and Air Force. He designed the medal in 2002. Soon after, it was approved

VDHA has been assured of the family's permission to award the medal to its members as appropriate.

The first two VDHA WMV awards were presented in 2013 to Dave Broeker and Johnny Mayo. With more detailed program content and a resolution made by the VDHA Board, the next set of medals were presented at the 2016 Reunion awards banquet to Russell Walters, Al Dodds, and a third to Frank Gavaldon. You can see their nomination text in the December 2016 issue of *Dogman* on page 5.

Nominees for 2018 were

actions in Vietnam or Thailand that were never recognized by the Military, or

3. Outstanding service to the VDHA, or

4. Outstanding and consistent or ongoing service to or for deployed troops or veterans, or

5. Outstanding and consistent or ongoing service to or for Military Working Dogs past or present.

The Nomination Review Committee members for 2024 are:

- * VDHA President John Harvey
- Marine Scout Dogs, Vietnam
- * Johnny Mayo — Army, 39th

Continued on Page 12.

Seeking VDHA Warrior's Medal of Valor Nominees

Continued from Page 11.

39th Infantry Platoon, Scout Dogs (Bien Hoa), Vietnam

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

* Tim Hennessey — Navy, Sentry Dogs, Vietnam

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

Nominations should be received by the committee no later than January 15, 2024 to be evaluated in time for the Reunion. There will be up to a maximum of two VDHA recipients each Reunion year unless the committee finds and approves by majority vote an exceptional circumstance for a third medal.

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

The nomination text itself should have as much written information as possible (not just "so and so is a great person, I know him well"), describing the event(s) or circumstances or activities past or present for which the VDHA member is being nominated. See example nomination text in the December 2016 issue of *Dogman* on page 5 or the other *Dogman* issues mentioned above.

The nomination should contain the Who, What, Why, Where, When, and How to the best of the nominator's knowledge. Those VDHA members

wishing to nominate a fellow member for the Upcoming Reunion in Reno, NV, should send the nomination to VDHA President John Harvey at jrhcpa@hhcpas.com or John Homa at jhomatdh@vdha.us by January 15 of 2024. If you do not have e-mail please send the nomination by letter to President John Harvey, 3000 Holiday Drive, Unit 1101, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33316.



Can You Identify This Dog and Handler?

This photo was sent in by Bob Smith, Msgt Ret. He says he found and copied 25 pictures of guys he was with in the 12th SP at CRB in 1967-68. He has names or nicknames for most. Can anyone identify this dog and handler?

Vietnam Dog Handler Association Officers

President:	John R. Harvey	3000 Holiday Dr., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316	860-796-7813
Executive V.P.	Ernie Ayala	4000 Pierce Street #143, Riverside, Ca. 92505	626-862-2667
V.P. Trackers	John Dupla	904 Chetwood Dr., League City, TX 77573	281-332-2163
V.P. Thailand	John Homa	P.O. Box 204, Hixson TN 37343	423-368-4493
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
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DEADLINE

**ARTICLES FOR
THE
DECEMBER
ISSUE MUST
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BY
November 23**

The Tip of the Spear; A War Dog Story

Continued from Page 8.

teams were and which ones were the top tier teams. Well, Skipper and I made a very big impression with our first enemy encounter.

This time, Skipper and I were attached to a Mechanized Unit which means the tanks and the armored personnel carriers (APCs). We went out into the field in a big convoy to a predetermined spot. We circled up just like the Conestoga wagons did in the westerns that everyone has watched on TV or at the movies.

The area we were in was very open with rolling plains. You could see for long distances in three directions. The fourth direction, which happened to be behind where we had stopped, went out about two miles. It had a slanting, long-descending valley heading toward our right. When I was leaving the perimeter of the circled tanks and APCs, we were heading straight toward the upper part of that descending valley. So, it was like an ice cream cone. We were at the top of the cone heading across but, if we turned right, we would be doing a slow descent into nothing but jungle.

The First Alert is the hardest you will ever do. It makes or breaks your confidence and can actually end up being embarrassing. We were barely 100 yards outside of our perimeter, and Skipper gave me a very strong scent alert.

In Dog School, we learned to read the terrain, adjust for the wind, and come up with the best guess we can. When Skipper gave his alert, my mind went crazy.

First off, I thought, "...You've got to be kidding!" Assessing the situation, I was momentarily tongue-

tied. I thought, "they are just not going to believe me!" Thank God for our good training. I said, "to hell with it" in my mind, and I fell back on my training. I called the alert, just like I had been taught.

So, setting the scene: Skipper was at a complete stand still, on all fours, ears forward, nose in the air taking in the scent. I stood there at the front of the patrol, and I pointed to an object way across the valley. If you're observing us from the other side of the valley, there is no doubt where I am pointing and that Skipper is at full alert. Anyone could have interpreted Skipper's and my actions.

"I am calling an alert at approximately one and a half miles ... and based on terrain, wind, and what is just visible to us ... the most logical spot for the enemy to be is in that big bush on the hillside way over there."

The enemy knew we were pointing at them and knew they were spotted. So, no sooner had I finished the alert, they shot four little rockets up into the air from that bush. They then picked up their mortar and took off running across the top of the hill while our base unit braced for incoming. They were not very accurate, and the rounds landed harmlessly. They got away due to the distance they were from us.

Skipper and I, however, had made a very big impression on the troops. Our first alert was in the books, and no casualties. My confidence level from that point on had no boundaries. I knew we were a very good Dog Team and was very confident in our ability to do our job and flush out the enemy.....So Bring It On.

...Skipper and I are on the job.

Not to be grandiose, but I never was afraid, and was, if anything, too cavalier in carrying out my job. However, if you're going to walk point every five days for the next nine months and survive, you can either have attitude or be afraid to go out and do your job. I elected to not worry about anything and not acknowledge that I could be killed or hurt. Skipper & I ...we just did it.

With God's abundant blessings, and even with the best dog that God and country could provide, without the helping hand of divine providence, Skipper and I would have had a short tour. You can do everything right and still end up dead.

On our in-the-field rotation schedule, everything became a blur. The helicopters came and took you to the field, and at the end of the week, you rotated out. Skipper and I averaged two days of rest, and then we were back out in the field.

You just went wherever you were sent. In a regular army unit without a dog team, drawing point position was not a good thing. Nobody wants to die, and walking point *greatly increases* that possibility. As a dog handler, walking point and being the target was just a routine day for us.

This position requires so much focus, that you spend all of your days concentrating on terrain and every move your dog makes. You become your own island. I made zero relationships while in Vietnam.

Unfortunately, that pattern seems to have held true for most of my life. If not for the fact that my

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The Tip of the Spear . . .

Continued from Page 13.

friend was in dog school with me, we would not have hung out together when we happened to be back in camp at the same time. I had almost zero interaction with the other handlers. I was determined to maintain and grow the bond with Skipper to insure that we were always operating at a very high skill level.

After I had the hand-off from the old handler, I never ever spoke to him, and even made it a point to avoid him. I had no desire to obtain any of his insights, information, or whatever from him regarding Skipper or anything else.

The missions you do remember are the ones that almost send you home in a body bag. Luckily, there were not many, but there were enough:

There is a saying that goes something like "...God protects the innocent and the stupid." Thank heaven, on this day, He definitely protected the stupid.

Skipper and I were assigned to a Mechanized group. I heard rumblings about the commander not being very bright and that the men were not very happy with his decision making.

Continued in the next issue.

Keep Your Nose Clean

*By Tony Tancredi
VDHA Member*

It was around April 1970 and we were out on our normal mission: King finding bad guys, weapons, booby traps, etc. We had to cross a small stream. As we were getting out, we encountered a lot of leeches. I pulled one off my chest and a bunch of other guys had similar issues.

The next day my mission was over, but I did notice King was rubbing his nose all the way back to our unit. I immediately went to visit the veterinarian assigned to us. I told him what he was doing and thought he had a cold.

Well, the doctor looked at King's nose and told me to hold his head very tightly. He then took out his tweezers and pulled a large (about 3 inch long) leech from his nose.

Other than some minor bleeding he seemed to be fine. That was a very unusual experience to say the least.

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Upcoming Events

- | | |
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| Thru September 15 | Military Working Dog
Heritage Museum -
Coins for a Cause
Raffle - Website:
mwdheritagemuseum.org |
| September 11-15 | Howard County Vietnam
Veterans Organization
Kokomo, IN
All Veterans 41st Reunion.
Website: hcvvo.net |
| October 3-8 | Vietnam Security Police
Association Reunion
Joint Base Charleston
Website: vspa.com |
| October 27 | A commemoration of the
10 th Anniversary of the
Military Working Dog
Teams National
Monument— Lackland Air
Force Base, San Antonio |