



DOGMAN

A Brotherhood of All Combat Veteran Dog Handlers



VIETNAM DOG HANDLER ASSOCIATION

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Third War Dog Memorial Takes Shape in Rhode Island



"In Eternal remembrance of the valor and courageous loyalty of Military Service Dogs, who stood as guardians by our soldiers' side. Their devotion and bravery inspire us to commemorate the profound bond between humans and canines. May this monument stand as a testament to their service and legacy, ensuring that their memory continues to shine brightly in our hearts"



By Steve Lemish
Dogman Editor

For many years, Scott and Ruth Gordon had a dream to create a monument honoring the dogs that protect our freedom and security. Now, thanks to their efforts, there is a new war dog memorial located at the Rhode Island Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Exeter, RI.

The War Dog Memorial is the last of the three monuments crafted by sculptor A. Thomas Schomberg. Each is an 18-foot column and relief of a soldier and dog dedicated to the war dog efforts during the Vietnam War. The first two monuments were installed at the March Airfield Museum in Riverside, California and Sacrifice Field, Fort Benning, GA.

Scott Gordon was from Milwaukee and joined the Navy in 1963. He served aboard a destroyer

stationed at Groton, CT. He met Ruth and they married in November, 1968. Ruth's brother, Sgt Stephen Burdick, Sr. was a Marine and served two tours (1966-70) as a mine sweeper in Vietnam.

Scott and Ruth, who were married 52 years, got their first dog, a St. Bernard puppy in 1969. They competed in dog shows and purchased Delmyra Kennels in 1976. They cared for many dogs there over 47 years including companion, therapy, search & rescue and police dogs.

They were both passionate about making a memorial. Ruth recalls Scott would say, "We will make this happen, it is a must." Then they discovered the movie, War Dogs, American Forgotten Heroes made in 1999. It was then they started planning to have a war dog monument in the Rhode Island

Veterans Cemetery. Jeff Bennett, executive producer of the movie, spearheaded the fund-raising efforts and was the driving force to create the first two war dog memorials.

In 2005, Scott and Ruth contacted Cynthia and Tom Schomberg and 18 years later (in 2023) the statute arrived and Ruth was overwhelmed." Her only regret was that Scott, who passed away in 2020, "could only be there in memory." She later said, "The War Dog Memorial means more to me than everything else that I have accomplished."

Dedication of the memorial is tentatively planned for Memorial Day, 2025 but more work needs to be done. See the *Dogman* issue in March and the VDHA website for updates about the date of the dedication.

From the President

By John R. Harvey
VDHA President

The Luckiest Platoon

This story begins 59 years ago. It was the end of June 1966. Eighty-one young men began to board a train headed for South Carolina at stations in New Haven, Milford, Stratford, Darian, Stamford, Manhattan and Port Authority. They were headed for a summer vacation at Paris Island, having just enlisted or been drafted into the United States Marine Corps. There was short hair and long hair. There were those who were calorically challenged (fat) and those who looked like they had been in a POW camp with ribs pushing up against their shirts.

Two and a half days later, following one train change and a final bus ride, they arrived at the Marine Corps famous or infamous recruit depot. Upon departing the bus, we were instructed to stand on yellow foot prints painted on the pavement. Throughout all of the yelling and screaming we were shuffled through a gauntlet where our heads were shaved, multiple needles shoved into our skinny little arms, and were issued our new hip green clothing otherwise known as uniforms.

Our senior drill instructor. Staff Sgt Ott, soon found out that his entire platoon had been recruited in the Northeast, thus dubbed us the Yankee platoon. Platoon 2027 was born. The calorically challenged soon lost their excess weight, and the skin-and-bones guys started to bulk up. Led by our other drill instructors, Sgt Albright and Sgt Washington, we soon developed the motto "One Big Heel" as we placed first in our battalion's close order drills competitions. Sgt Washington's cadence could have auditioned at Carnegie Hall. All these years later when I am out for a walk I will hear the sound "Give me your left rightal left."

Over the next couple of years, 77 out of 81 men in our platoon deployed to Vietnam, some for multiple tours. In spite of multiple combat action awards and purple heart injuries all 77 returned back home. One member of our platoon had been severely injured during TET. After spending 35 days in a coma in Japan he emerged with no memories of where or why he was where he was. A doctor suggested that he "return to the beginning of whatever he could remember." So, while back home on leave in Connecticut, he pulled out his basic training year book for Platoon 2027.

Thus he began a 50-plus year legacy of trying to find and connect with all of his brothers from Platoon

2027. His search, for the most part, was centered in New York City and Connecticut. However, over the years, he traveled throughout the United States to follow up on any leads he might have received. He eventually found 45-50 members of our Platoon.

Some had become very successful, some had overdosed on drugs, some were living on the streets, and some just wanted to be left alone and put the horrors of war behind them. As a brotherhood, we began annual get-togethers in Nags Head, North Carolina, or Christmas parties in Plainville, CT.

In 2006, we celebrated our 40th anniversary back at Paris Island. We had the privilege of installing a monument near Maggi Marine. The monument was dedicated to what the brass at Paris Island referred to as the "Luckiest Platoon in the Marine Corps." This designation was bestowed based upon the number that went to war and the fact that we all returned home.

On November 9, 2024, ten members of our platoon were able to get together in Southbury, Connecticut to celebrate the 249th birthday of the Marine Corps. We were a motley crew. Two members hold doctorate degrees, one was a successful real estate mogul, one had had a successful career in the yachting industry, one had started a successful manufacturing company and owned a vineyard, and one had a successful 30-year career with the Veterans Administration helping men from all of the various conflicts over the past 60 years deal with the remnants of war. I think that our drill instructors would have been proud.

As the holidays approach I want to wish everyone in our VDHA family a wonderful Happy Thanksgiving, a very Merry Christmas, and a happy, healthy New Year. We all have a legacy that we should tell. I would encourage everyone to send our editor Steve Lemish your memories - while we still can.



VP Report

The First Day on the Perimeter

By Ernie Ayala

VDHA Vice President

Weekday mornings around 7 am, while my wife is still asleep I usually start my day by turning on the H & I (Heroes and Icons) channel and tune in to the latest episode of "Combat." I usually like to see the date it aired and think of what I was doing around that time. It began when I was still in high school and I remember my brother-in-law telling me it was a great show because it was so realistic. I didn't start watching it until 1966 when I was transferred by my truck driving job to an out-of-town assignment.

By then my first marriage had broken up and I lived alone. Tuesday night I watched my fill of military shows of the sixties. There was Combat, 12 O'clock High, McHale's Navy and F-Troop. That's when I realized my brother-in-law was right, Combat was my favorite show.

There was an episode called First Day about these four green troops assigned to Sgt. Saunders' squad. It was quite a glimpse of four different personalities on their first day of combat. Although I never watched Combat again until I came out of the service, I never forgot the show, especially the music I used to march to during our bivouac trek.

My first day out on the perimeter in Tay Ninh, Vietnam was actually our unit's first day walking our K9s on the compound. I was dressed for battle with my dog Heidi in her work collar, a loaded M-16 rifle, eight magazines of ammo, a steel pot, flak jacket, bayonet, .45 caliber M1911 semi-automatic pistol and a pocket knife (in case everything else failed).

It was a dark and stormy night; it had been raining all night and I had a rubber poncho on. There really wasn't much of a trail yet so I walked as close to the wire as I could.

This was nothing like I was trained for in Okinawa. It was so dark I could only see about five feet of my leash and none of my dog or the trail. The mud was so thick I could barely walk. I couldn't help

but remember a commercial I saw on TV showing a soldier on sentry coffee and a well-deserved break.

I still couldn't sit down; just leaning up against his jeep felt so good. Ten minutes later he was off to the next post. I went back to work with my legs starting to ache.

Around four a.m., I was bushed and leaned up against an empty bunker. It felt great resting for a moment as my eyes roamed the lighted part of the perimeter. I saw trees in the far side and bushes



closer to the lights than tall grass that probably should have been cut down by now.

As my eyes rolled over to the right, on the corner, I swear I saw a bush move then I focused on the bush. On the right I thought I saw the grass move. I imagined the enemy creeping up on me, my eyes burning, then closing. I awoke to a sunrise and shock. "Heidi," I screamed, "why didn't you wake me?"

My heart pounded, but no one knew so I wasn't in trouble. About 30 minutes later Sergeant Clay's truck showed up with the other three handlers and their dogs already loaded. It was Joe Raspberry's, Tommy Boone's and Clarence Aho's first night, too. Who knows what story they had for their first night on the perimeter.

About that Donut Dolly Story

*By Jim Meechan
25th IPSD Unit Director*

The Donut Dolly article in the September issue seemed to indicate very few soldiers ever got to see one in person. In cases where guys were in the field nearly all the time (infantry), that could be the case. I realize that most other rear-area jobs were not like being a scout dog handler. But, I was fortunate enough to be where they did visit and try to cheer us up.

I think we played the old game, "The Dog's got Your Bone," at least once (not a scout dog either).

The two in the picture came to the 25th Scout Dog Platoon in Bien Hoa on occasion and I think up to Tay Ninh also if I remember correctly. One was named Sara but I can't recall the other's name.



Photos provided by Jim Meechan and were taken at the 25th IPSD area in Bien Hoa in mid-1970. Seated on the left is Vet Tech Mark Zele from Massachusetts.



These two Donut Dollies would visit every few weeks for a couple hours. Jim says the taller one might be Sara.

SPECIAL NOTICE:

Members are responsible for updating their profile information to keep it up to date by logging into their account on the website with their login (member number) and password (known to you). You can change/correct information such as address / email address / phone number, etc. Once you enter your new information you will need to scroll down to the bottom and SAVE it.

IF you have a problem, contact Bob Palochik at bobpalochik@vdha.us, or if no computer, call him at 702-557-3538 for help.

Wall That Heals Schedule

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) has announced The Wall That Heals national tour schedule for 2025. The exhibit includes a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial along with a mobile Education Center.

The 30th season of The Wall That Heals will visit 31 communities during the year. The traveling exhibit honors the more than three million Americans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces in the Vietnam War. It bears the names of the 58,281 men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam.

Host City	Opening	Closing
Sebring, FL	3/6/25	3/9/25
Kissimmee, FL	3/13/25	3/16/25
Baton Rouge, LA	3/20/25	3/23/25
Corpus Christi, TX	3/27/25	3/30/25
Laredo, TX	4/3/25	4/6/25
D'Iberville, MS	4/10/25	4/13/25
Whiteville, NC	4/24/25	4/27/25
Roxboro, NC	5/1/25	5/4/25
Johnson City, TN	5/8/25	5/11/25
Liberty, SC	5/15/25	5/18/25
Shaler Township, PA	5/23/25	5/26/25
Warren, OH	5/29/25	6/1/25
Troy, NY	6/5/25	6/8/25
Claremont, NH	6/26/25	6/29/25
Farmington, ME	7/3/25	7/6/25
Antioch, IL	7/17/25	7/20/25
St. Louis County, MO	7/24/25	7/27/25
Buckner, MO	7/31/25	8/3/25
Nevada, IA	8/7/25	8/10/25

212th MP / Infantry Scout Dogs

By Mel Steinhauer

212th MP SD

I became an Army K9 handler purely by accident! My slightly-older brother was drafted by the Army in September of 1966. Since our father and his brothers enlisted in the Army after the attack on Pearl Harbor, I enlisted during my senior year of high school in February of 1967.

The Army recruiter convinced me to finish school and enlist on a delayed entry for a future class of Warrant Officer candidates to become helicopter pilots. I thought wow! I could be a hero, win the war, get out of the Army in four years, and then make lots of money flying tourists around Hawaii!

In September of 1967, my brother deployed to Vietnam and was assigned to the 199th LIB at Long Binh. By November, I began basic training at Ft. Polk, Louisiana with about 40 other WO Candidates. At graduation, I was informed that I had failed my flight physical, would not become a helicopter pilot, and was sent to the MP School at Ft. Gordon, Georgia. Boy, was I mad! My dreams were shattered and I did not want to be a cop! The only good news was that now my four year enlistment had “magically” dropped down to only two years.

During MP School, the Captain needed 50 volunteers to be sentry dog handlers going to Vietnam. The idea of walking an attack dog, not taking crap from anybody and not doing any police work was very appealing. Plus, our two months of sentry dog training in Okinawa, counted off from our 365 day tour in Vietnam, so that meant we had 60 days less to get wounded or killed. I learned the 212th MP SD Company was at Long Binh and I could see my brother; so I signed up!

In May of 1968, I arrived at Ft. Buckner, Okinawa to get my dog Caesar 594X and begin training. After graduating the end of June, we loaded our dogs in shipping crates, got on a C-130 for a rough 6 hour ride to Cam Ranh Bay where the 981st MP SD Company was located. I spent 3-4 days there, then loaded Caesar on another C-130 flying down to Saigon and a convoy to the 212th MP SD Company at Long Binh.

We soon began walking the perimeter of the huge Ammo Dump every night, and I was able to see my brother several times before his tour was over in September when he left to go back home returning to a civilian life. I continued walking Caesar almost every



Mel Steinhauer and his brother at the 212th MP SD Company at Long Binh in 1968.

night at the Ammo Dump, with little time for sleep during the days with frequent work details and caring for our dogs. In October, one of the few volunteer 212th scout dog handlers was wounded by the VC while walking point for a squad with the 720th MP Battalion in their assigned 22-square-mile TAOR just outside the southern perimeter of Long Binh.

That's when I learned they needed a volunteer to replace him. So I volunteered, said goodbye to my sentry dog Caesar. I was assigned scout dog Heidi M066 and completed a two week course at the Bien Hoa Airbase for incoming scout dog handlers from the U.S.

I traded in my steel pot for a bush hat, my flak jacket for bandoleers of M16 magazines, my gas mask for a bayonet and my bright white MP arm band for frequently mud-covered fatigues. I also gave up my belief of some safety inside the ammo dump's three rows of concertina wire for the fear of walking point in areas outside those protective boundaries knowing that the guys behind me depended on my not making mistakes. The 720th Bravo Company "Bushwhackers" were five squads of 8-10 guys who conducted light infantry night ambush patrols from sunset to sunrise at pre-determined locations within their TAOR. We would be transported to our starting point by vehicle,

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212th MP / Infantry Scout Dogs

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or small boats called Boston Whalers at sunset, and later picked up at sunrise the next morning to return to our HQ at Long Binh post.

The squad leaders were usually Staff Sergeants while the rest of us were 19-22 year old PFCs or Sp4s. We were not the typical "Spit-Shined MPs" with a 45 caliber Colt pistol in a holster. We were all "Armed and Dangerous" with a variety of weapons to include an M-60 machine gun, an M79 grenade launcher, M16s, hand grenades, some Colt 45s, maybe a shotgun, a few LAWs, sometimes an early version of night vision they called a "Starlight Scope," one big heavy backpack radio to call for help and hopefully carrying enough ammunition.

After a rotation of night ambush patrols, our squads would take turns at five-day recon missions, operating

out of permanent or temporary outposts. Then I would get a day off to rest and get Heidi checked out by our 212th Veterinary Technicians before starting my next rotation of Night Ambush patrols.

My Scout Dog Heidi and I walked point for the 720th MB Bravo Company "Bushwhackers" from November 1968 until June of 1969, after voluntarily extending my tour for another 38 days. I did that because the Army offered an "early discharge" to anyone having less than 6 months left to serve on their enlistment. Before leaving the 212th, I took some beer, whiskey and snacks to Heidi's kennel, we both got drunk and said our goodbyes. I got on a "Freedom Bird" back to California to process out. I was honorably discharged as a SP4 and returned to my home in Ohio at the ripe old age of 20.

Ironically, in May of 1972, I re-enlisted as a PFC in the MPs at Ft. Sam Houston and discovered that I really liked being a Cop! Later in 1973, I deployed to Thailand as a Buck Sergeant MP Investigator for a one-year tour. Then I returned to Ft. Sam Houston as a Staff Sergeant NCOIC of the MP Investigation section, until my second honorable discharge in 1976. This led to a varied career in civilian law enforcement until my retirement in 2009.



Mel with his MP infantry scout dog Heidi.

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, 4723 Rolando Blvd, San Diego, CA 92115 (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.

The Tip of the Spear; A Wardog Story

Editor's Note: This is the 14th installment of this multi-part story. It details his journey from college to Vietnam and working with his scout dog Skipper (X268). This episode details some additional missions.

By Vernon J. Roman

Scout Dog Handler

One of the more interesting missions we did was working with the Marine CAP Teams. This was a small group of six marines that stayed in the local villages. They would move to a different hooch every evening and spend the night watching, through the doorway, for NVA or Vietcong sneaking into the village to cause trouble. During the day, we would run a small patrol in the area of the village acting as a deterrent. As far as I could tell, we always had a dog team placed with them.

If there was any room left for a shock to your system, living in the village would complete the process. They live in nothing more than a hut with a mud floor. If lucky, there might be a few boards thrown together to make a bed. No water or utilities.

During my first night in the village, the mama-san came out to the door entry, lifted her clothes, and peed in front of us. Since we're on the subject, the Vietnamese gave new meaning to "...if you gotta go, you gotta go..." They went wherever they happened to be. It was not uncommon to see a Vietnamese squat down on the side of a road and do his or her business. Then they pull out a plastic baggy, bag their droppings, place the bag on their head, and carry it home to fertilize the family garden. Despite how dirty and filthy it was to me, it was very common for us to turn over our C rations to the mama-san where we were staying. They could add spices, cook up the food, and then we would all

share in the meal. I have to admit, they did make those C rations tasty.

One of the reasons that the enemy was intimidated by our dogs was the fact that they were not used to having dogs as pets. It was a Vietnamese delicacy to eat puppy dog. I did happen to be with the Marines during a TET celebration and had the experience of eating with the village chief. We had saki and rice with puppy dog. It was not bad eating. You just had to ignore where that meat came from.

Unfortunately, combat can happen anywhere. There are innocent victims that get caught in the cross fire and get hurt or killed, resulting in more nightmares for the soldiers involved when they go home. This particular evening, we were settled in one of two villages that were close together, but had a rice patty somewhat between them.

It was early evening, the Marine on watch spotted an intruder at our six o'clock. He was attempting to enter the village at that end. Things then happened very fast. Since I had the dog, I was to go to the back of the village. The Marines would go to where they saw the VC enter the village and start a sweep of the village with the purpose of driving him into Skipper and me. With Skipper's help, I should be able to spot the VC and take him out.

We had the benefit of the moon. So, we should be able to spot the VC. Skipper and I took our position facing the village with the rice paddy being directly behind us. Skipper and I, however, made a perfect silhouette standing there guarding the back end of the village. There was a second potential intruder hiding in the rice paddy behind me. Fortunately for me, he was a bad shot. Suddenly, green tracers were zipping past my

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**ARTICLES
FOR THE
MARCH ISSUE
MUST BE
SUBMITTED
BY FEBRUARY
23**

So, You Want to be a Dog Handler?

Editor's Note: This is another multi-part telling Rick's story as an Air Force dog handler. This episode starts in high school and ends on the first day with his dog.

By Rick Marty

USAF, 1964-1968

"So, ya wanna be a dog-man?"

Those were the first words I heard from Staff Sergeant Seth Blalock as I sat in his office at the kennels that morning. Sgt Blalock was NCOIC of the kennels at Kunsan Air Force Base, Kunsan, Korea in 1965, and as it turned out, one of the best men I have ever had the privilege to know.

I just skated out of high school in June of 1964 and spent that summer working on cattle ranches and riding the amateur rodeo circuit around Northern California. In late October that year the rodeo season was over, the seasonal ranch work was drying up and I had no place to live but the cab of my 49' Studebaker pickup and damn little money to go with it.

A buddy I had rode the circuit with was pretty much in the same circumstances and suggested, over a few beers, we join the service. What did he have in mind? Well, the Marine Corps of course. So down to the recruiting offices we went the next morning. Back in those days the recruiting offices were always on the upper floors of some dingy old office building and this was no exception. A dimly-lit hallway with signs sticking out of the wall above doors; Navy recruitment, Army recruitment, Marine Corps recruitment, Air Force recruitment. Along with the signs, a feeling of anxiety and maybe dismay was also sticking out as we walked along that hallway.

A handwritten note on the door of the Marine Corps recruitment

office informed us that the recruiter was out for the day, whooooo, let's go. From down the hall came a voice, "say boys, what are you looking for?" "Well, we were just looking." "Come on into my office and let's talk." Two days later we were on a bus to the Oakland, California Induction Center and promptly became some of the newest members of the United States Air Force.

Boot Camp or Basic Training; we've all been there and done that, nothing more to say. After Basic at Lackland AFB in San Antonio I was sent to the PATS Barracks across base. PATS, was known as Personnel Awaiting Tech School, but to the young airmen involved it was also known as KP (Kitchen Police) everyday for several weeks.

After endless days of scrubbing garbage cans and refilling milk machines I was assigned to a Tech School Flight to become, thanks to my wonderfully low test scores, an Air Policeman for the United States Air Force.



Air Police Tech School was, I must admit, pretty interesting. The instructors treated us a lot more human (or is that humane) than the DI's in basic, which caught us all by surprise. My personal favorite time

in tech school was on the firing range during weapons qualifications. Back in those days it was still the .30 caliber carbine, the .38 caliber Combat Masterpiece revolver, the .45, 1911 pistol, and the 12 gauge riot gun. Because of my childhood background in hunting and shooting, I qualified as an expert with all weapons and they made kind of a big deal out of it.

I had an Uncle that I hadn't seen in a dozen years that was a WWII vet and a "Lifer" in the Air Force stationed somewhere around there. I guess word got out and he came and looked me up while I was in tech school, probably my mom's doing as he was her brother.

Uncle Bruce, as it turned out, was on the Air Force Small Arms Championship Firing Team and made a big deal out of my shooting. He also said that I could be assigned to the firing team which helped ease my way through the rest of the Air Police training.

We had Sundays off during tech school and got to do whatever we wanted, go to church and/or the beer hall, etc. One Sunday I was wandering around the base and I heard a lot of dogs barking so I followed the sound and came upon the Sentry Dog Training Facility. Wow. I stood outside the fenced area and drank in the sight of all those great German Shepherds as they danced around their kennels and sounded off.

Shortly, an airman first class came out of a building and noticed me hanging on the fence. He approached and wanted to know my reason for being there. Of course I had no reason, as I told him, except that I loved dogs.

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So, You Want to be a Dog Handler?

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Well, after a short tour of the kennels and some BS trying to impress me, the Rube, I was on my way back to my training area but with a memory that would never fade.

Well, my Uncle Bruce didn't have as much pull as he or I hoped for because about two weeks before graduation from tech school, we all received our assignment orders. My orders read: "Following a thirty day leave you will report to Travis AFB for transportation to duty station assignment for a thirteen month isolated remote tour of duty at Kunsan Air Force Base, Kunsan Korea."

With fresh Airman third class stripes on my sleeves, I arrived at Kunsan Air Base on St. Patrick's Day, 1965. After some orientation classes, I was quickly put to work as a security guard, better known as a Ramp Rat, guarding empty airplanes and fenced-in spaces with strange titles like POL storage or LOX plant. Just to make it really interesting, a jeep or truck would show up on your post five or six times during your shift, containing a couple of sergeants or A1C's to play the game, i.e., challenge the vehicle and determine the identity of the occupants. When identified, you would then report your post and answer endless questions about your security orders for that post. Gheeze.

After a few weeks of this, the newness had worn off and I was pretty dissatisfied with the situation. One night on a 24-hour break, I was sitting in the Airman's Club having a beer when a small group of airmen came in. They were pretty loud and having a lot of fun. I was drawn to their cheerfulness and didn't-give-a-damn attitude so went over and started talking with them; K-9 troops, go figure. After a few more beers and a lot of conversation, I was invited to come out to the kennels the next day and talk to the NCOIC about an open dog that needed a handler.

All of which brings us to me sitting in Sgt. Blaylock's office trying to convince him I would make an excellent dog handler even though I had no idea what I was talking about, or for that matter, what I was letting myself in for if I became one. A few years later I realized that he saw through my BS with 20/20 vision but decided to give me a chance anyway. The orders were put in and two days later I was assigned to the K-9 section OJT (on the job training) as a handler.

Reporting that first morning to Sgt. Blalock, he walked me into the kennel area and introduced me to Whiskey OBO2; 90 pounds of teeth and pissed-off

attitude. Sarge said his handler, Airman Cuda, had only left a week before so Whiskey was not ready or willing to accept anyone new just yet. He continued with something like, my best advice is go get a chair, set it here by his pad and talk to him. Don't go on the pad or try to touch him because he will probably tear your arm off. Crap, what have I gotten myself into?

Eight, maybe ten days were spent talking to that dog, but I was already in love with him. The first few days he totally ignored me unless I moved, then he was barking growling and snapping towards me. After a while, he began to show some interest in me or maybe just the biscuits I was tossing him, but we eventually advanced to the ear scratching and brushing stages.

Then the big day, the first time taking him "out." There were a couple of different opinions back then about the proper way to take a sentry dog out of the kennel for the first time. Some held with always keeping him muzzled for the first few times others claimed no muzzle, either you're in control or not.

I asked Sarge about it and his reply was "how confident do you feel?" So, what the heck, no guts no glory, to the training area Whiskey and I went, no muzzle.

Mistake! As I was fumbling with the latch on the gate to the training area I stepped back and right on Whiskey's right front paw, he let out a yelp and came up my left arm biting me six times between wrist and elbow. I yelled, probably screamed, Oh S—t and Whiskey must have heard sit because that's what he did and held his paw up for me to look at. Fortunately, I was wearing a B-15 jacket, o there was a lot of padding and all I had was a very pronounced set of bruises up my arm. Whiskey never ever made any attempt to bite me from then on but I made dang sure I never ever stepped on his paws again.

Continued in the next issue.



Whiskey working the attack sleeve.

Treasurer's Report

CHECKING \$38,242.36
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 TOTAL \$43,317.86

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.

March Field Memorial

The 25th anniversary celebration of the War Dog Memorial at March Field near Riverside, CA is being postponed due to the Air Museum's plan to re-design and landscape the area. The re-landscaping will not be completed by President's Day 2025 when the anniversary event was scheduled.

The war dog memorial will remain on the site as well as all the commemorative bricks which were purchased by dog handlers and placed around the memorial. Watch for the March edition of *Dogman* and the VDHA website for updated information.

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

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Tip of the Spear

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head. This was the only time I would fire my M-16 while in Vietnam. I turned toward the assault and opened up on full automatic in response.

Almost instantly, the marines were at my side and they also unloaded a lot of fire power into that rice paddy. Then, as suddenly as everything started, everything got dead quiet. I don't remember what drew us toward the second village, but we headed directly there and entered a hut that was all lit up. Lying on a make shift wooded plank bed, was a little girl about six years old, in all white clothing. She had short-cropped jet-black hair. At first, she appeared to be sleeping peacefully, but there was a hole in her neck where a bullet had entered and killed her instantly.

We then tried to mount a pursuit of the intruders. We called for illumination from the big artillery guns. They put out a lot of light and really can light up the area. I was leading the group. Under these circumstances, anything that moved was going to be shot. Damn it...Suddenly, there were people in front of me that I instantly knew were not enemy. They were out trying to catch the parachutes holding the flares in the sky. We had no choice but to abort further pursuit and risk another villager getting killed.

When I had turned and opened up on the intruder in the rice paddy, I still had to hold on to Skipper. So as I fired with one hand, it resulted in the M-16 going upward in a left arc. It was not hard to guess where that bullet came from that hit the village girl.

Continued in the next issue.