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July 2015  
Award Winning  
Monthly Newsletter

Volume 7, Issue 7

[www.mwdtsa.org](http://www.mwdtsa.org)

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MWDTSA touches the lives  
of dogs and people near  
and far. This month, our  
articles and photos take us  
from South Carolina to  
South Korea, including  
stops in Massachusetts,  
West Virginia, Michigan  
and California, and back in  
time to both Afghanistan  
and Vietnam.

Subscribe to see where we  
connect next month!

Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

## MWDTSA KENNEL TALK



***Marines and Bostonians react to the performance of the Boston Pops  
Fireworks Spectacular during Boston Navy Week in 2012.  
Photo by Petty Officer1st Class Elisandro T. Diaz***

## The 4th

By Michael Hurder

We danced in the streets  
and sent fire into the sky  
the people cried with joy  
it brought tears to my eye  
my home, my America  
still free, still proud  
celebrating freedom  
our anthem sung aloud  
children clung to parents  
parents to each other  
we shared our independence  
gave hope to one another  
our loyalty is steadfast  
our grace defies all wrongs  
we are our father's hope  
our mother's loving song  
America the beautiful  
be strong, be great, be true  
remember how we freely bled  
for our red, our white and our blue

## Johnny Marches Home

By Dixie Whitman

Some heroes are larger than life. Johnny Mayo is not that man. It's his soft-spoken likability that draws people to him and urges them to share his vision. This time, his vision is to see a South Carolina War Dog Memorial dedicated on Veteran's Day 2015 in Columbia, S.C. He's getting close.

Johnny, a dog handler with the 39th Scout Dog Platoon in Vietnam, feels a great debt is owed to the war dogs of Vietnam. These courageous dogs paid the ultimate price, affecting thousands of families in a quiet way when their loved ones returned home from war to continue living their lives, creating families and impacting friends. It is estimated that an additional 10,000 American servicemen would not have returned home without the use of approximately 4,200 dogs who scouted, patrolled, tracked, alerted and more in the jungles of southeast Asia. Among these are Johnny's two dogs, Tiger 9A34 and

Kelly 819A, both German shepherd dogs.

Johnny himself would not have been here, but for Tiger. In July of 1970, Johnny arrived in Vietnam and volunteered to become a dog handler. His partner, Tiger, had worked as a scout dog, but was being retrained as a Mine Dog, which means he was able to sniff odors down to depth of four feet.

After their two month training, the team was sent to the 173d Airborne to start their work, only to be told upon arrival, "Sorry we are no longer in need of a mine dog. Can you retrain him as a Scout Dog?" After another two weeks, they were whisked to the front to begin their work together. On the second day, their second mission, luck ran out for Tiger as he hit a trip wire. The team was medevac'd to Cam Rahn Bay, which housed not only a medical hospital, but a veterinary complex, as well.



**Above: Johnny Mayo poses with a miniature of the proposed statue of a handler kneeling on one knee next to his German shepherd dog. The statue will be about eight feet tall and will be surrounded by flagstone.**



**Above: South Carolina War Dog Memorial replica, showing detail.**

**Right: Johnny attends events with his current partner, Luke.**



Johnny Marches Home continued on page 3



Johnny Marches Home continued from page 2

Tiger never recovered from his wounds, Johnny was back on the front lines again in three days, attached to a new dog, Kelly.

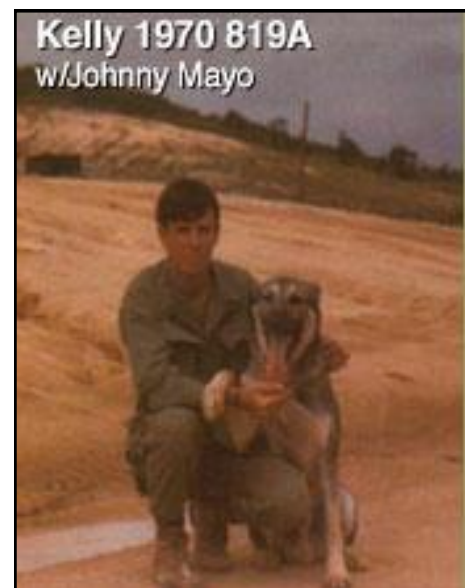
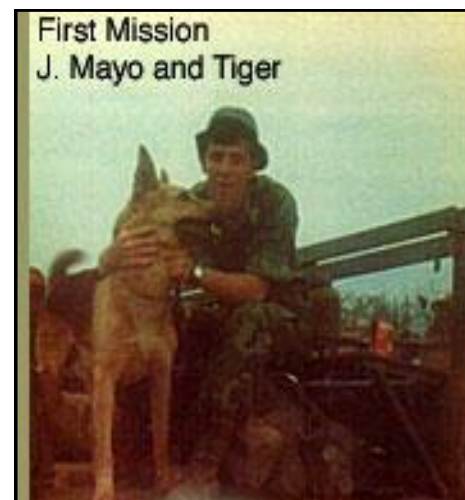
Kelly took point on missions from October of 1970 through February of 1971, when Johnny, walking point with Kelly, was injured by punji sticks. A punji stick was a sharpened piece of bamboo, hidden in a camouflaged pit, that was designed to severely injure the soldier if he fell into it, thus requiring additional soldiers to carry him off of the battlefield.

The wounds received from the punji sticks took Johnny out of the fight and soon put him heading homeward.

For much of the past dozen or so years, Johnny has championed the

story of the Vietnam War Dogs by creating a moving Vietnam Wall of sorts for the dogs, complete with kennel signs to honor each of the 4,200 dogs who served— those who were killed in action, the dogs who died of disease, were turned over to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) or were euthanized, along with the 204 dogs who made it back to American soil. His moving tribute has been used to educate thousands upon thousands of people and is a startling visual reminder that dogs were abandoned by our government in Vietnam.

Johnny was part of the original national war dog memorial movement, and, along with many military working dog veterans, he was stunned by the National Park Service's negative response to the request to place a me-



**Right top: Johnny, years ago with his Siberian Husky pals, posing in front of his War Dog Wall.**

**Right center: Johnny Mayo and Tiger as they begin their first mission together.**

**Right bottom: Johnny Mayo and Kelly.**



**Left: Johnny and Buck pose with children as part of their public education efforts.**

Johnny Marches Home continued on page 4

Johnny Marches Home continued from page 3

morial on the mall in Washington, D. C.

His purpose then became to place a memorial to South Carolina dog handlers in their capitol city. That dream is about to become a reality as he will make his way home this fall with a stunning war dog memorial— almost home at last.

The memorial is being created by renowned sculptress, Renee Bemis, and will feature a bronze statue of a dog handler kneeling beside a German shepherd dog. The statue will be approximately eight feet tall. It will be transported this fall from Illinois, will make a stop in Nashville at the Vi-

etnam Dog Handler Reunion and will then travel on to Columbia, S. C. where it will be installed in time for a Veteran's Day dedication.

Over the years members of MWD TSA have been honored to support many of Johnny's public education initiatives and to have shared time with this warm and welcoming man.

MWD TSA is honored to have supported the South Carolina War Dog Memorial. We congratulate Johnny on this crowning achievement and his final war dog march homeward, with a new and breathtaking memorial in tow.

**Right top: Johnny, years ago with his ever present pal, Buck, rode in special events. Johnny served as Buck's ghost writer in a children's book entitled Buck's Heroes.**

**Right center: Johnny Mayo (second from right) attended several Fort Benning events in the early to mid-2000's, sharing time with other Vietnam era handlers and with then active duty handlers.**



**Above: At an event with Vietnam era Veterans, Bob Konarske, Jerry Whitman, Johnny Mayo.**

**Right: Johnny joined MWD TSA for a fun base event at Fort Gordon Army kennels near Augusta, Georgia in 2008. He enjoyed putting on the gear and catching a war dog once more.**





## MWD TSA Answers Requests from South Korean Kennels

**Right:** MWD TSA was asked to assist with prizes for an Army K9 competition among the Kennels in South Korea. Competition is one way of fun training and morale boosting, while also bringing out the best of the teams' abilities.

At the end of the three day 3 event, the teams taking home trophies are: SGT Harter took 1st in Explosive Detection, 2nd in Patrol & the Iron Dog Event. SPC Ventimiglia took 2nd in Narcotic Detection. The 903d MWD Detachment/ Area IV won the Top Kennel Team .

We salute all of the participants and were delighted to be able to send support.



**Left and Below:** MWD TSA was asked to assist with supplies of dog bowls and dog toys at an Air Force kennel in South Korea and were delighted to send our support. We think these teams are really going to enjoy their new "stuff".



## American Heroes Air Show

Story and photos by Jan Slotar

MWDTSA was at the American Heroes Air Show with a public education booth, for the second year in a row, on Saturday, June 20, 2015. The helicopter only Air Show, was located at the Hansen Dam Recreation Center in Lake View Terrace, Calif.

It was an extremely hot day, and the drought we are having in California, really didn't help matters any. But, we had several volunteers that braved the heat to help MWDTSA with our public education message. Check out the photos of our great volunteers who took the initiative to explain to visitors what MWDTSA does for our awesome, MWD Teams. Also helping out but not pictured were, Kristen, Robert and Garrett McEachron, Theresa Baer, and Janie Newman.

This year I found two K9 teams. Los Angeles Airport K9 Officer Gonzalez,

with K9 cutie, Nori, a German Short-hair Pointer, and Pasadena Police K9 Officer Steve Arcand, with K9 Figo, a very focused Belgian Tervuren. I was trying to take a photo of them, but K9 Figo was so obsessed with his chew toy, an orange ball, there was only one way to get him to look at me - Officer Arcand put him on a sit stay, and then put the ball between my feet. After I took the photos, Officer Arcand released K9 Figo, who immediately ran up to me to claim his toy.

And yes, I also found horses. Valley Wide Los Angeles Police Department Community Cavalry Rough Riders, the Color Guard for the start of the Air Show. This unit consists of both LAPD Officers, and volunteers, and I was able to get a photo before they loaded up the horses and left.

The fires in Central and So. Calif. did



**Right top: Volunteers LeAnna, Rachel, and Tracy**

**Right middle: Volunteers Makena, Scarlet, and Monika**

**Right bottom: Los Angeles Airport K9 Officer Gonzalez and K9 Nori, and in no particular order, Officer Lara, Officer Williams, and Officer Yang**

**Below: HH-60G Pave Hawk, Combat Search and Rescue helicopter, Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada.**



Heroes Air Show continued on page 7



Heroes Air Show continued from page 6

have an effect on the Air Show, as all of the helicopters with the various County and State Fire Departments left the show early. But, on hand for visitors was the 66th Rescue Squadron from Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. They arrived in their Sikorsky HH-60G Pave Hawk, Combat Search and Rescue helicopter. Also on

hand, was a Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos, Calif.

I would like to thank all of the visitors who stopped by our booth to look at our educational displays, and those who signed up for our newsletter. A special thanks to

those who made a donation to help with our shipping costs: Capt. Philip Ayala, Los Angeles Fire Department, the Lievense family, Ed Miles, Lisa Campbell, Jon Carnes, Kaiden Flores, Greg Mattera, Nancy Barajas, the Olmos family, Fred Rupp, and Darren Chambers.



**Above: Volunteers Lindsay, Grace, Edith, Anna, Jan and Tiffani**

**Above right: Pasadena Police K9 Officer Arcand and K9 Figo**

**Right: Volunteers Mark and Jit**

**Bottom left: (left to right) - LAPD "Rough Riders" - Volunteer Dawn Kaufman, LAPD Lt. Patty Blake, Volunteer Bobbie Sale, LAPD Sgt. Scott Kennedy, and Volunteer Bill Updegraph**

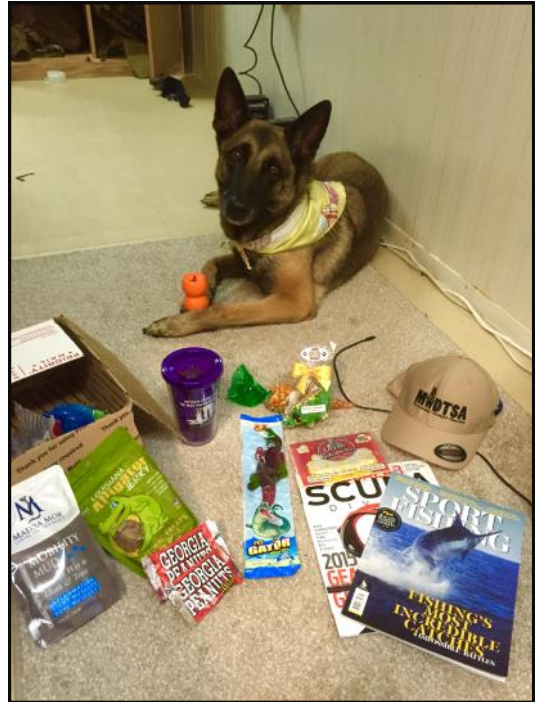
**Bottom right: Volunteers Lindsay, Grace, Edith, Anna, Vietnam Vet Nick Callas, and Jan**



## Thanks for your support! What can you do?

**MWDTSA relies on the generosity of our donors, without whom we would be unable to make the care packages to the MWDs and their handlers happen. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the following companies and individuals who gave recent donations:**

Alpine Electric Traverse City, Mich.  
 Capt. Philip Ayala, Los Angeles Fire Department,  
 Los Angeles, Calif.  
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 Ronda Pearl Coleman  
 Jen & The Copy Shop on 8th St Traverse City, Mich.  
 Dick's Pour House, Lake Leelanau, Mich.  
 Dynatech, Traverse City, Mich.  
 Kaiden Flores  
 Danielle Hanson & Bags & Baskets Company,  
 Traverse City, Mich.  
 Lee Hughes  
 Suzanne Julian  
 Roree Kohler  
 The Lieveense family  
 The Longs, in memory of their 2 senior dogs  
 Michele Macdonald in honor of her brother James  
 Greg Mattera  
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 Laurie Newton  
 Northport Creek Golf Course, Northport, Mich  
 The Olmos family  
 Painting With A Twist, Traverse City, Mich  
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 Alison Phillips  
 Tanja Rapp  
 Red Gate Farm, Maple City, Mich.  
 Stephen Redden  
 The Romeo's, "In memory of our boys: Howie, Murphy,  
 and Bennett"  
 Fred Rupp  
 Jan Slotar  
 Sun Dog Kennel, Traverse City, Mich  
 SunDog Kennel in Memory of all the SunDogs  
 and MWDs at the Rainbow Bridge  
 Traverse City, Mich.  
 The Tribune Northport, Mich.  
 Anna & Ryan Winn, "In memory of our sweet girls,  
 Ginger & Frances, who are playing together at  
 the Rainbow Bridge."  
 Kathy Woodring



***MWD Asta and her handler, Chris, send a thank you for their recently received Florida-Georgia box. Chris said their Pet Gator, Snowy, who is also a Gummy treat, may not survive long.***

The third quarter care packages will be themed: Totally Tubular. Think surfing type items, plus a lot of summer fun. Would you like to help us gather some great items to go inside the boxes?

We need:

- Chuck It Squirrels in Large
- KONG Tails in Large
- Doggles in Size Large

We can use funding or items.



## Bark in the Park

By Nikki Rohrig

The West Virginia Power let their baseball park go to the dogs, literally, on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Bark In The Park is an annual event that lets the public bring their dogs out for a night of fun at Appalachian Power Park in the capitol city of Charleston, WV. Nothing says America quite like the combination of baseball and dogs! Appalachian Power Park had dogs in various shapes and sizes, including Yorkie's, French Bulldogs, German Shepherds, Bulldogs and Great Danes.

Dunbar Animal Hospital in Dunbar, WV, contacted us and invited MWD TSA to share their booth at Bark In The Park. We were thrilled to accept as this is a new area for us and it is a great opportunity to get our

name out into the public arena. We handed out ink pens and brochures that talk briefly about our mission, which includes public education, so this was a great fit for us.

Dunbar Animal Hospital set up a doggie pool with floating ducks! The dogs could come over for a quick drink and if they picked up one of the ducks, they got a prize. One of my favorite dogs was the German Shepherd (of course!). She spotted the pool and was thrilled to come and see all the floating ducks. As expected for a GSD, she went above and beyond...she picked up each of the ducks, one by one, and set them back down in the water. Needless to say, she got more than one

prize.

Another one of my favorite dogs was a beautiful, chocolate colored Newfoundland. Ginger was so sweet and had her sister in tow, also a chocolate Newfoundland. These gentle giants were extremely well behaved and even posed for a picture!

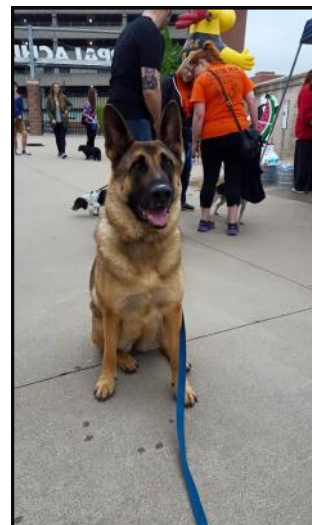
Bark In The Park was a great event and we are thankful to Dunbar Animal Hospital for the opportunity to share this with them. If you are in the Charleston, WV area, please stop by and thank them! We are looking forward to partnering with them in the future for other events. Enjoy some photos of the event!



**Left: Volunteer Nikki shown with brochures and pens to help spread the word.**



**Right: and clockwise Handsome and adorable pooches who attended the event: a noble German shepherd dog, little Yorkie dressed in support of Pittsburgh Pirates, an Australian shepherd playing with the ducks in the pool and lastly an adorable American Bulldog puppy.**



## Painting with a Purpose

Story and photos by Allison Merrill

Another fun event in Traverse City, MI. at Painting with a Twist.

Our volunteer, Allison, hosted a Painting with a Purpose MWD TSA Event, where everyone paints the same artwork with their own interpretation. She was able to pick from over 2,000 paintings and chose Me & My Buddy to paint! Half of the proceeds from the class were then donated to MWD TSA. It was a fun & enjoyable night!

The awesome instructor, Cheri, walked every participant thru each step! Even though most participants were novices, the nerves soon abated. Among attendees was a 30th birthday gal, Amanda, and also a couple on a blind date! How cool is that?

Close to \$300 was raised! Allison hopes to do the event again! Thanks to this great company for partnering with us and providing a positive, fun event, putting the fun in fundraising.

**Right Top: Instructor, Cheri, leads the class.**

**Right: Painters working hard on their masterpieces "Me and My Buddy".**



**Above : The finished products produced by some proud participants. Thanks to all of you who supported MWD TSA with this great event.**

**Right: Volunteer Allison's masterpiece.**





## Northport Creek Golf Fundraising

Thank you to Allison for pulling together a great golfing fundraiser at Northport Creek Golf Course in the village of Northport, Mich. A huge thanks to Chris McCann, the golf pro at Northport Creek Golf Course for all of his hard work.

A special thanks to all of the great folks who supported with the sponsorship of a hole or two or three. You made a huge difference. Please stop by our list of donors to see some great folks who supported this fundraising event.

Story and photos by Allison Merrill



**Above: Even the rain did not stop the fun.**

**Below: Thanks for these yummy golf clubwiches.**



**Right: Allison in charge.**

**Right center: MWD TSA Golf ball.**

**Right bottom: Donated prizes.**



**Left: The sixth hole was sponsored by Chris and Peter Romeo in memory of their boys: Howie, Murphy and Bennett. The hole sponsors were generous in sharing their love for MWDs.**

## In Memory of a Fallen Brother

By Michael Hurder

Santiago Herrera Escobar, SP4, US ARMY, SCOUT/PATROL Dog Handler and American Hero.

Fell on 19 May 1972 in the south of Bien Hoa Province, RVN in service to his country.

RIP brother

"We'll walk through it together, Shorty. No sweat huh? This is what we were made for, man. I did it. You can do it. Let's go before it gets any worse."

It was almost too noisy from the downpour to even hear Santi, let alone see what I was doing, but we both whispered because we knew the cadre was spread out in the woods to catch noisy teams and fail them for this stage. That meant a do-over and the more times you had to do it over the harder they made the next run to pass. The next thing you knew it was dawn and you'd been at it for over 8 hours...and you still hadn't caught the sapper.

"I guess." I sulked, "Still, they could have picked a better night, you know? One with a moon or something? This is worse than dark. I can't even see her ears man. How am I gonna call her alerts if I can't even see her?"

At this point I was just bitching. You might think Georgia would be a nice place in the summer. That depends on how moist you like to keep your clothes when wearing them and your sheets when sleeping on them. I thought the humidity was bad in Boston. WHOA! My skin also attained this rich clay colored tint from the grime that was ground into your every exposed pore day in and day out. My partner's drool always added to the sweet elixir of bodily fluids and nature's detritus I collected while crawling through the underbrush.

This exercise was a critical stage in our training. Basically this was man-hunting. The scenario: Your Partner alerts on personnel...usually a scent alert. You then prosecute the alert to the successful termination or capture of the threat. For the initial runs through this type of exercise the cadre set the trails up intentionally



working with Mother Nature. Good weather, stiff breeze blowing more or less in the team face, fairly simple terrain to cover. Once you got through that, they got serious. Truth is, in real life scenarios, the enemy isn't stupid and isn't going to put himself in a position that would make it easy for us to find him.

We are now well past the easy training. And I am on my third pass. Lady and I have died all three times. Santi and his Partner Rebel, made it through in one.

"Hahaha. Shorty, you're a trip man. What you want to paint orange stripes on Lady's ears? Come on, man. Tighten up on the leash a bit. When she finds something you'll feel it, right? No slack...feel her doing her job and then do yours.

Come on now. I'm cold, I'm wet and I need to crap in the worst way. Let's get this over with. Roger that?"

"Roger that!"

Santi is playing Shotgun/RTO (Radio Telephone Operator) for me. When I give him the go he signals, "Team two to tower, we are Oscar Mike, over".

"Team two, Tower, copy. Acknowledge you are on your third, I repeat, third run, over."

"Thanks for reminding me!"

"Shut up, Shorty"

"Team two, Tower. Roger that. Third

Fallen Brother continued on bottom of page 13



## Prince

By Michael Hurder

Silent stalker, take the lead  
My hunter never weary,  
Using nature as you need  
That I may see more clearly

Sit before a killer trap  
Lead me 'round patrols  
Show me where the spider's at  
Hiding in his hole

Your senses our protection  
Alert throughout the night  
With courage and devotion  
No fear of foe or fight

Willing night to break away  
We near the mission's end  
Grant us Lord another day  
For heavy hearts to mend

And though despair may scar and tear  
My courage fade and pale  
I know that you are always there  
Your strength will never fail

Silent stalker, ever ready  
Show your Princely pride  
Blessed partner, strong and steady  
Forever at my side

Fallen Brother continued from page 12

time's a charm. Out."

Then Santi said " Let's show these jerks what you're made of man. Come on."

I made it through on the next pass using Santi's simple suggestion to maintain a better "connection" with my partner no matter the environment. A lesson learned that served me well over the next several months because all I did was work at night. This wasn't the only time Santi's guidance brought me through.

We finished Scout Dog Handler School together in December 1971. We all made our way to Vietnam separately or perhaps in very small groups of two. Don Lassiter and I made the trip together from Fort Dix, NJ. Others came from the west coast at different times and dates.

About half of our graduating class made it to Bien Hoa and the other half went north to Da Nang. Santi was in the latter group but we'd heard they were all doing well through the grapevine.

On April 19<sup>th</sup> during a rocket attack on Bien Hoa (no rockets landed near me), I got tangled up with Prince when we were trying to get to cover and ended up with a

third concussion in two weeks and a second AC separation of my left shoulder in the same time frame. Though I didn't find out about it for a few days when I woke on a Plane headed to Guam, the Army decided I'd had enough, at least for a while, and sent me back to the world.

In the meantime, my very best friend ever, Santiago Herrera Escobar was slowly making his way south towards us at Bien Hoa and in fact just a few days after I left Vietnam, Santi and the rest of our graduating Scout Dog School class, made their way to our unit, the 34<sup>th</sup> Patrol Dog Platoon, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bde, 1<sup>st</sup> Cav.

I wish I'd made it long enough to see my brothers again because I've never seen any of them since, as happens a lot with soldiers. Can there ever be anything more unfair than what happens to soldiers when their "trade" is no longer needed? You spend the prime of your life living, bleeding and slowly dying in spirit with men you never met before but would readily give your life for in an instant without hesitation. Then you are ripped apart suddenly and you never see them again.

I had great aspirations of meeting them all again one day. I especially looked forward

to meeting Santi and Don, Jeff and Joe my hooch-mates, and oh hell all of them...Ron, Jimbo, Jack, Charles Duel, James and Henry too. But just a few months after I got home I got a MARS call from Jimbo telling me that Santi had passed away in-country. The call got cut off and I couldn't get it back.

Santi got pneumonia on duty and he got so sick that he died from complications. I can't help but think those complications were heavily seeped in Agent Orange poisoning. More than one of our guys came back from that duty with sores all over their bodies and breathing difficulties because of inhaling that poison for a whole shift several times a month. The storage complex for that defoliant was one of our Patrol posts. Don and I lucked out and got the AMMO Dump instead of the defoliant yard. Santi, my brother aspirated in Vietnam on 19 MAY 1972.

God rest your soul my brother. I'll see you on the other side. Give Prince a hug and tell him I'll meet him over the bridge. I will always love you and remember you brother.

RIP  
Shorty

## Sit. Stay. Support.

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## From the Archives

### *An Independence Day to Remember*

*Chris K081 was a particularly talented gal; and those talents and assets were honed by her handler, Richard Trapp, into a Patrol and Explosives Dog extraordinaire. Their teamwork resulted in their being pulled to work highly sensitive and critical missions with members of the Special Forces Group.*

*It was Independence Day, 2011, back home it was being celebrated with parades, family reunions and BBQs, but in Afghanistan, the day would be spent on a mission to assist a nearby village. After a firefight lasting two hours, the team prepared to return back to their tiny Forward Operating Base (FOB) to rest, Mission Complete.*

*The ATV that Chris and Richard rode hit a 60 pound IED. Fortunately, only half of the explosive actually detonated, but the heat from the half that did explode burned Trapp's uniform and melted his boots.*

*That deployment, Chris had 7 confirmed finds, including two bomb making factories, a weapons cache filled with AK47s and rounds of ammunition along with multiple IEDs. Her work no doubt saved the lives of coalition soldiers and local civilians.*

*For the full story, and stories of other MWD heroes, visit the MWD TSA website at [www.mwdtsa.org](http://www.mwdtsa.org).*

