



Proposal to the Vietnam Veterans of Brevard
from the
Space Coast War Dog Association

Established in March of 2002, the Space Coast War Dog Association (www.scwda.org) is committed to honoring all past, present, and future Military Working Dogs. Our mission is:

- 🐾 to carry on programs that perpetuate the memory of Veterans of the Armed Forces
- 🐾 to comfort the survivors of the Veterans of the Armed Forces
- 🐾 to recognize the service of Military Working Dogs
- 🐾 to foster education initiatives which promote the history of War Dogs/Military Working Dogs
- 🐾 to obtain funding for the erection of a Military Working Dog memorial on or around Patrick Air Force Base

Approximately 4,000 Military Working Dogs served our Armed Forces during the Vietnam War alone. These dogs were not pets, but highly trained, four-footed soldiers with duties such as Sentry, Scout, Booby Trap, Tunnel, Mine, Water Patrol, Coast Guard, Search and Rescue, and Explosives Detection.

In Vietnam, these four-footed soldiers are estimated to have saved 10,000 US and allied forces lives, not to mention the countless injuries prevented. The Dogs and their Handlers completed over 88,000 missions in the Vietnam War.

Sadly, our government classified these brave souls as expendable equipment. At the end of the Vietnam War, roughly 250 Dogs were reassigned to other military installations. The several thousand remaining were given to the South Vietnamese Army, euthanized, or worse yet, let loose to fend for themselves in the jungle.

Through the efforts of the SCWDA, together with the Vietnam Veterans of Brevard, Vietnam Veterans of South Florida, and members of the Vietnam Dog Handler Association, we would like to propose that we work collectively to bring the stories of both Handlers and Dogs together at Florida's 16th Annual Vietnam Veterans Reunion at Wickham Park.

Opening Ceremonies:

We wish to participate with a wreath dedication. Our plan is to have Pete Peters (39th Scout Dog Handler), Ted Marshall (Vietnam Dog Handler and “Last Patrol” member) and representatives from the Vietnam Dog Handler Association, Vietnam Veterans of South Florida, and Vietnam Veterans of Central Florida with dogs on lead to walk point as escort. Patrick Air Force Base Military Working Dog Section will have a K-9 in attendance. Also, we plan on inviting K-9 Units from the Florida Highway Patrol and those within Brevard County to take part. Our initial estimates are twelve handlers with their dogs escort the wreath to the wall. In addition, planned participants are the family of SSgt Robert W. Hartsock, 44th Infantry Platoon Scout Dog Handler and Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, and Kim Burton and Carolyn Marshall who will be carrying the wreaths. Two wreaths will be presented to recognize the Dogs and their Handlers and, those who gave their lives in defense of our freedom.

Missing Dog Display:

The Missing Dog Display is a K-9 Kennel. The footprint is approximately 8’ by 8’, including the United States and POW Flags. The inscription that describes the display is as follows:

“The leather leash and chain hanging from the kennel represents the everlasting eternal bond between dog and handler.

The empty kennel where they once slept represents the life that they gave to protect us, our brothers, and our freedom.

The inverted bucket reminds us that they are no longer here for us to fulfill their needs of food and water, for which in life they asked for no more in return than our companionship and affection.”



Culvert Dog Kennel:



Scout Dog Casey at the Culvert Kennels

Half metal culverts were used as dog kennels. We would like to display a K-9 kennel with the Missing Dog Display. Also planned with these displays, will be a placard with photographs of the Vietnam War through the eyes of Dog Handlers, SCWDA brochures, and other educational items.

Closing Ceremonies:

During the closing ceremonies, we hope that we will have Pete Peters with K-9 on lead, along with a Military Working Dog from the Patrick AFB Dog Section.

We appreciate the support that you are giving us to aid in the education of those who are unaware of the role the Dogs and their Handlers played in Vietnam. We also hope to offer support to the Handlers and wish for them to find comfort in knowing that we will not let their dedication and sacrifice be forgotten.



Scout Dog Casey in the Vietnam jungle
Handled by Joe Ertel, 1970-1971