

**Subject** References  
**From** Tobi Spellerberg <info@bronzeman.com>  
**To:** BECU <marcoump@aol.com>  
**Date** Today at 4:17 PM

Hi Lee,

I hope all is well. Here is a list of references for other commissions which we recently finished.

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rcummings@hodgkinspd.org

Please feel free to contact any or all of the above references. Thank you!

Warm regards,

Tobi Steinberg

## Marco Island Vietnam Memorial Sculpture Timeline

- 2020 – February 20 – The Wall that Heals sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) closed on Marco Island. This was the 3d time Marco Island's veterans' community sponsored the wall on the island, the most of any city in the US. In all, approximately 65,000 people visited the exhibition and over \$100,000 was raised for the VVMF over the 3 showings. Post 404 started discussing the need to have a permanent memorial on the island to honor the thousands of Veterans on Marco and surrounding area.
- 2021 – June 21 – Post 404 Meeting Minutes - Lee Rubenstein stated the Post was working on the initial statue for Veterans Park which would be the Vietnam Veterans Three Soldier's statue like the one found at the Vietnam War Wall in DC. The goal would be to install it next year once the park is finished. Lee stated almost half the funds were in hand and we could also expect the Island Country Club F Troop to provide funding and maybe some more from Marco City. We may still have to raise additional funds.
- 2021 – October 19 – Post 404 Meeting Minutes - Lee Rubenstein reported the Three Soldier's statue found at the Vietnam War Memorial Wall cannot be duplicated so he and Bill Duncan have been talking to the studio that created the statue with another idea which consists of 5 service members in kaki green (no rank or service noted) of mixed race and gender plus a service dog helping a wounded soldier on the battlefield. It would consist of separate statues grouped on a granite base approximately 10 feet across and 9 feet high. He presented a drawing where it could go in the park with landscaping, lighting, and benches. This idea would have to go to the City Council for approval of both the statue and the location. This should be done during park construction so the developer can plan the site and electrical requirements. All Officers agreed with the concept and recommended he and Bill continue coordinating with the studio and City Council.
- 2021 – November 16 – Post 404 Meeting Minutes - Lee Rubenstein and Bill Duncan continued talking to and exchanging drawings with the studio that created the Three Soldiers' statue. Our statue will contain 5 service members in kaki green (no rank or service noted) of mixed race and gender plus a service dog helping a wounded soldier on the battlefield. It would consist of separate statues grouped on a granite base approximately 10 feet across and 9 feet high. He stated it would probably cost about \$175,000, but that we already had significant funds allocated. All Officers agreed with the concept and recommended he and Bill continue coordinating with the studio and City Council.
- 2021 – December 21 – Post 404 Meeting Minutes - Lee stated we are waiting for the City Council to talk to the Foundation Doners. They are committed to \$150,000. The full cost of the monument will be around \$300,000. Another \$60,000 to \$80,000 will be needed for the plaza. We should get full approval by January.
- 2022 – January 18 – Post 404 Meeting Minutes - Joe Batte reported the Parks Foundation meeting was cancelled but would be rescheduled. He and Lee talked about naming the monument and asked for suggestions. This would help with advertising its existence. He stated the cost would be approximately \$400,000 with Post 404 contributing approximately \$55,000 and the Foundation providing most of the funds. We may have to ask for some funds from the city. F Troop may also be a source of funding.
- 2022 – February 15 – Post 404 Meeting Minutes - John stated he and Lee were to present the proposed statue to the Parks and Recreation Committee of Marco Island later in the day at 3:30 and invited all members to attend. We are looking for approval to move to the City Council. Steve Moore suggested we hold a contest to name the statue. This needs further discussion.

## Marco Island Vietnam Memorial Sculpture Timeline

- 2022 – October 18 – Post 404 Meeting Minutes - Joe Batte stated he and Commander Lee attended a Parks and Recreation Committee of Marco Island meeting and have discussed steps forward with the City Manager. The City Manager wants to put the design of a memorial out to local artist which all agreed would add time and may result in something we don't like. It was recommended we work with the City Manager versus trying to work around him and see where this takes us. Lee and Joe recommended we have Vietnam Veterans ready to talk to the artists to give them an idea of what they went through and what they thought should be represented.
- 2022 – November 10 – Hurricane Nicole makes landfall near Vero Beach. The Post Officers made the decision to move the Veterans Day Ceremony from the Veterans Community Park to the Lutheran Church out of concern for the attendees.
- 2021 – December – Meeting with McNeese and Casey to discuss the memorial project. The City Manager informed the Post 404 Commander and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander that the City would take over the paver program, Post 404's primary fund raising program for Veterans memorial projects.
- 2023 – February 1 – Meeting with McNeese and Casey to discuss the Paver Program. This is when we told them Post 404 should run the whole program.
- 2023 – February 28 – Post 404 Meeting Minutes – Joe Batte stated the memorial project is stalled with the City Manager wanting to conduct a call for artists.
- 2023 – March 28 – Post 404 Meeting Minutes - Lee and Joe Batte discussed the Vietnam Memorial and their discussions with the City Manager. The Post was told to clarify the funding source prior to the call for artists. The estimate for the statue, landscaping, benches, lighting, and base is expected to be about \$500,000. The City Manager will set up a meeting and Lee and Joe will ask the Parks and Recreation Foundation if they would take this as their next project. There is a committee of 6 who will make the final design decision once all artist renditions have been received.
- 2023 – May 16 – Post 404 Meeting Minutes - Joe Batte, Vice Chairman-at-large, reported movement on the Vietnam Memorial Monument has stalled. Negotiations will resume after Memorial Day.
- 2023 – August 7 – Letter to City Manager stating the Post is removing itself from his program and will go it alone. "The Officers of American Legion Post 404 would like to inform you that we have decided to remove ourselves from any further participation in the Call To Artist (CTA) Committee which you created over a year ago. We do this with deep disappointment over the fact that no positive movement has been made by you."
- 2023 – August 25 – Discussion on the Vietnam Memorial
- 2023 – September 22 – Post 404 meeting to discuss the site walked with the City Manager. It was determined a site along the winding path was our preferred site.
- 2023 – September 24 – Post 404 letter sent to the City Manager stating we had a preferred location for the memorial along the winding path. It further states "To move this project forward as expeditiously as possible we would like to present the updated plans to Parks and Recreation at their October 17<sup>th</sup> meeting for concurrence. Following that we would like to present it to the City Council in November for their approval. I would appreciate your adding Post 404 to the November City Council meeting for this purpose."
- 2023 – November 21 – PRAC Meeting to present memorial plan to include dimensions.
- 2024 – January 31 – Start of Paver Sales at Veterans Community Park



**Marco Island American Legion Post 404  
P.O. Box 1190  
Marco Island, Florida 34146**

July 17, 2023

Mike McNeese, City Manager  
City of Marco Island  
50 Bald Eagle Drive  
Marco Island, FL 34145

Dear Mike

The Officers of American Legion Post 404 would like to inform you that we have decided to remove ourselves from any further participation in the Call To Artist (CTA) Committee which you created over a year ago. We do this with deep disappointment over the fact that no positive movement has been made by you. While American Legion Committee members, at the only 2 meetings held, completed their tasks in working with Art League Director Hyla Crane to explain Veteran input to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Statue sketch presented to you. Hyla followed up these meetings with a comprehensive CTA work Plan which you were to implement but never did. You also suggested meeting with the Marco Island Parks & Recs Foundation Chair Breznitz to consider fund raising opportunities, but again, never did. With Vietnam veterans passing away daily, further delays is unconscionable.

Numerous communications between you and Joe Batte, our Vice Commander, over the past year have taken place where we have pretty much begged for you to take a leadership role in bringing this committee together. A few weeks ago, just before you left for your City Manager Workshop meetings, you met face to face with Joe Batte where he vented our frustrations regarding no movement by you and how much we needed something positive to keep the mission moving forward. Mr. Batte made it clear that if we did not get some clear info from you demonstrating a firm plan to move our CTA forward, that the American Legion would consider leaving this committee and proceed on our own to bring a Veterans Memorial Statue to Veterans Community Park. You agreed to do this, but as of this writing, you failed to do so.

We will be continuing our Mission on our own. We believe the community will support us as they have for the past 20 years as we have raised all the funds and built a world-class memorial which has now been encompassed by a beautiful city park. We have been planning and working on this for 3 years now. Constant delays only mean more Vietnam veterans will have passed before we are able to honor them for their sacrifice. We regret that your wonderful CTA plan was abandoned by you, its author. We have no choice, as military folks, but to move forward with our mission. We will communicate, fund raise, and present our plan to our elected representatives for final approval in the near future. The Veteran's Committee has raised over \$700,000 for past memorial projects so we know what to do to raise the required funds for this memorial. We are looking forward to working with all departments of the City of Marco Island to complete this memorial to our Vietnam Veterans.

Respectfully,

Lee Rubenstein  
Commander, American Legion Post 404  
Marco Island, FL



# City of Marco Island

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August 4, 2023

Lee Rubenstein, Commander  
American Legion Post 404  
P.O. Box 1190  
Marco Island, Florida

Commander Rubenstein:

I have received your letter of July 23 regarding the proposed Vietnam Veterans Memorial. I acknowledge your intention to take me out of the loop as you continue to pursue the memorial on your own and will therefore step aside. I'm not inclined to use my time to defend events to date on this, but you have made statements I am compelled to address.

You state that I was "to implement" the Call to Artists that Hyla Crane graciously provided and failed to do so. This is false. I told the group that it would serve no purpose to issue a Call to Artists if no funding had been secured for the project. You told me your target was \$500,000, and I agreed to help create a presentation to take to the Parks Foundation to solicit their help in raising that money. You say I never met with Foundation Chairman Brechnitz to "consider fund raising opportunities", but I certainly did, to specifically discuss having a meeting of the Foundation to make our presentation. He asked for time to do some groundwork on his own before that happened.

It is true I have been unable to muster a meeting of the Parks Foundation. The fact is, it is not within my power to make that happen on my own. You mention my meeting with Joe Batte; what I said to him I would do I have done. You do not mention that I asked Mr. Batte, given that I wasn't getting traction on getting to the Foundation, whether there was anyone else the Legion might identify who could serve as champion for the fund-raising process to get it moving. I have heard nothing in that regard.

From the beginning I've stressed the importance funding for a successful project, and from the beginning you've indicated that raising the money will be no problem. I agree the people of Marco Island will enthusiastically support the project, but that doesn't happen in a vacuum. I was happy to build a process to find an artist and ultimately select a memorial, which I have acted on. That process has not been abandoned as you say, it still exists. I am not and have never been the guy to raise the money, that is not my role and I have been clear about that. If you want to lay the fact that no one else has stepped forward to take on that cause at my feet, so be it.

I have always supported this effort. There are specific veterans in my own sphere I would like to see honored, therefore I wish you the best of luck moving forward.

Yours Truly,

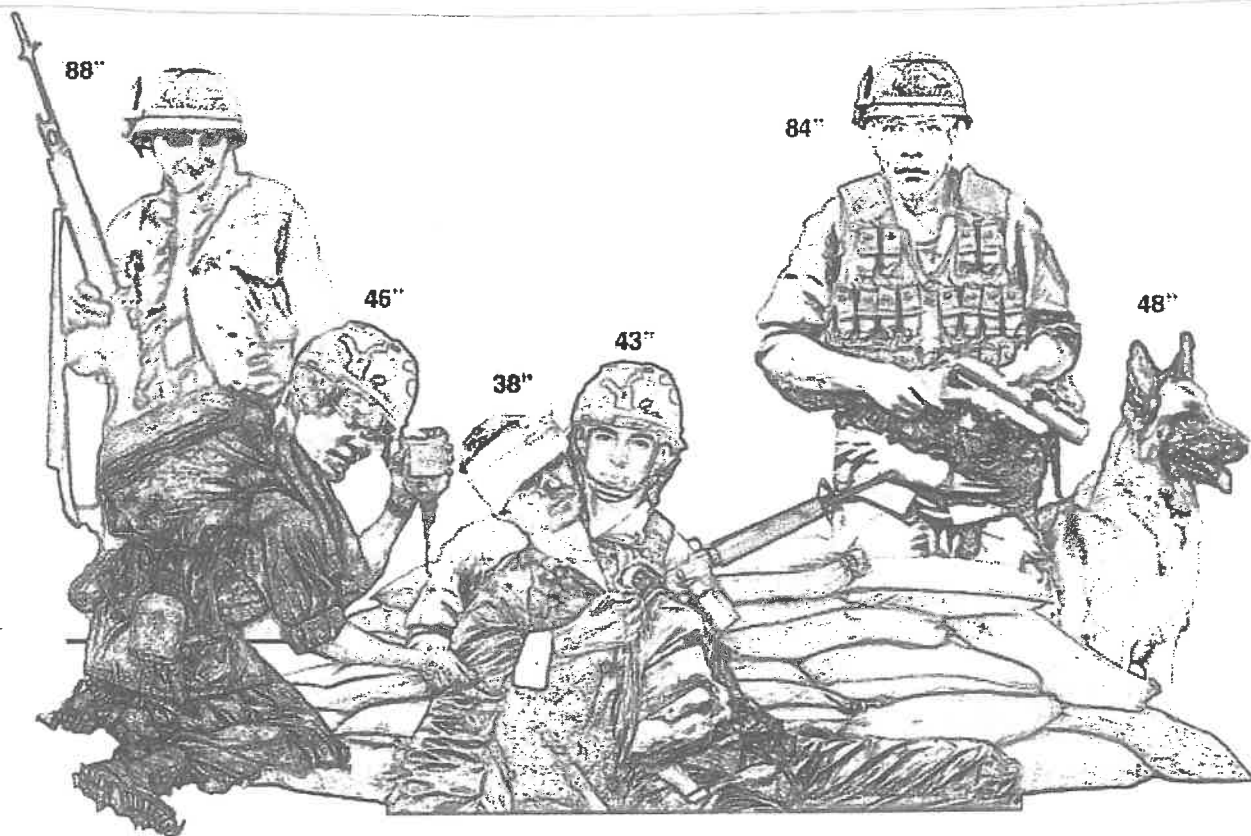
Michael A. McNees, City Manager





© Frederick Hart/VVMAF 1984

The Three Servicemen statue was added to the Memorial in 1984. The statue was sculpted by Frederick E. Hart, and was commissioned to add an element to the Memorial that depicts the realistic, emotional and heroic nature of the Vietnam generation. Many perceive the servicemen are looking out toward The Wall in search of their comrades.







## The honorable service of our Vietnam veterans

In 2012, President Barack Obama asked Americans to embark on a 13-year commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. The American Legion needed no persuading. Months later at our national convention in Indianapolis, we distributed thousands of copies of a presidential proclamation expressing our nation's respect and gratitude to Vietnam veterans for their service.

On March 29, American Legion posts across the nation will again lead their communities in observing National Vietnam War Veterans Day. On this day, we honor more than 3 million Americans who served in and around a country in Southeast Asia that most had never heard of until they were asked to risk their lives for it. On this day, we remember the 58,318 dead whose names are engraved on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., a list that does not include thousands of subsequent deaths due to Agent Orange-related illnesses, suicide and other conditions related to their time in service. On this day, we say "welcome home" to the men and women who were at times jeered and disrespected because they answered their nation's call.

That decade was tumultuous, and young veterans returning home often felt out of place and unwelcome – even, sadly, in some American Legion posts. But our nation has come a long way in healing, and that generation of veterans has proudly taken on the mantle of American Legion leadership. They've seen to it that those who served in the Gulf War and the global war on terrorism felt the support they didn't. And they understand better than most that the Legion recognizes the honorable nature of military service, period.

Historians will always debate the Vietnam War, but those who served know quite well why they were there. "The men and women of Vietnam fought for freedom in a place where liberty was in danger," President Ronald Reagan said. "Many sacrificed their lives in the names of duty, honor and country. All were patriots who lit the world with fidelity and courage."

# THE AMERICAN Legion MAGAZINE

Veterans Strengthening America

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Veterans who served at least one day of active military duty during wartime, or are serving now, are potentially eligible for membership in The American Legion. Members must have been honorably discharged or still serving honorably.

#### ELIGIBILITY

Dec. 7, 1941 – current

#### DATES OF MILITARY SERVICE

April 6, 1917 – Nov. 11, 1918  
 (Merchant Mariners who served from Dec. 7, 1941, to Dec. 31, 1946, are also eligible.)

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March 4, 2024, Marco Island Council Workshop Meeting

Hello, my name is Terry Kehoe. I am a member of the American Legion Post 404, I'm a Vice Commander At Large for Special Projects. I am also a Vietnam Combat Scout Dog Handler and a retired Firefighter/Paramedic/Assistant Fire Chief in Edina, MN.

From a previous PRAC meeting, I got the impression that our concept of a Vietnam Memorial was not being understood by those who were seeing it. Also, I heard that our concept did not have a "WOW" factor.

From that, I took the original flat sheet concept drawing of the "Vietnam Sculpture" and revised it to make it easier to understand. Since everything at the Park is in circles, I made this round cardboard picture and added some actual pictures from Vietnam to get the real feeling.

Then I created this concept model, which is even more realistic and gives a better feel of what American soldiers, went through with the Infantry while trudging through jungles, hills, rice paddies and streams in a hostile war zone.

We, Post 404, presented this concept model at the closing of the February 1<sup>st</sup> PRAC meeting and heard "Now we get it." The model brought the concept more clearly into focus. It gives a three-sided view of combat soldiers in military action as in Vietnam.

This is our vision; however, we know that the sculptor will make some changes as there are certain restrictions on what can be done with clay and bronze. I'm not a sculptor, but from what they did to make our Eagle fountain spectacular in our Veterans Community Park, they know what they are doing.

We also had this model on display at the Farmers Market and it received rave reviews from those stopping by. That also gave us an opportunity to educate others about Vietnam and to welcome home Vietnam Veterans.

#### Why does the Legion Post 404 push so hard for this?

This memorial is to remember our heroes who fought for this great nation. The veterans, the families, the children, the visitors, including council members, will have an opportunity to walk around, have a seat and ponder, see the flag plaza, the pavers, the Eagle fountain and now the "Vietnam Sculpture", all for their special reasons to them.

When the "Vietnam Wall" was here 4 years ago, I sat and said my goodbyes to my dog Prince while sitting in front of my friend's name, Larry Maxam, who I went through Junior and Senior High School with in Burbank, California. In 1966, our senior year, Larry dropped out of school and joined the Marines. Sadly, in 1968 Larry was killed in action in the Quang Tri Province of Vietnam and was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously.

For me, as an additional hurt, Prince, my Scout Dog and Best Buddy, was not allowed to come home. He, and 42 other highly trained and skilled dogs from my unit, the 39<sup>th</sup> IPSP, along with all the other dogs serving in Vietnam, were considered excess equipment, and euthanized by the military, rather than returning them home. Sitting at the wall gave me the strength to begin talking about Prince in public after 49 years, and I still do today!

I am very fortunate to have a very supportive wife, Lois, family, friends, counseling at the Vet Center, plus, a Golden Paws PTSD Assistance Dog, "Harley," who gives me the strength to continue working for these great causes. This Vietnam Sculpture in the Park will serve as a remembrance for many people who were impacted by the actions in Vietnam.

The members of The American Legion are dedicated to remembering all who served and came home to a less than heartwarming reception, and of course to always honor those who never returned. We have been at this venture for a long 4 years now, and you, the Marco Island City Council, have the power to help us add something to the public's wonderful Veterans Community Park.

We hope you will give The American Legion Post 404, the opportunity to enhance the Park for all of us!

Approve this plan! It can be a WIN / WIN for all involved and, of course, our Veterans. Thank you!











**Over 4000 military dogs served in Vietnam as Scouts, Sentries, Trackers and Patrol Dogs. Mostly German Shepherds and Labrador Retrievers, they were involved in over 90,000 missions. It has been estimated that their service prevented over 10,000 casualties. They were responsible for finding more than 2000 VC bunkers, secret tunnels and countless booby traps.**

**The K-9 Teams proved so effective that the Viet Cong began placing cash bounties on the dogs and their handlers.**

**Of the 4000 dogs who served in Vietnam, only a handful were returned home. When the war ended, the government refused the handlers pleas to bring the dogs home, and ordered them left behind as "surplus material". In America's haste to GET OUT of Vietnam, we left about 500 with the South Vietnamese and the rest were euthanized.**

**These were very special Soldiers and will always be remembered in the hearts of all**



## Dogs of Vietnam/Brief History:



There is a confirmed list of 3,747 dogs that were used in Vietnam identified by Dr. Howard Hayes, Veterinarian (RET) of the National Institute of Health as of March 1994, by "brand number" (a tattoo usually placed in the left ear of the dog). However, it is estimated that approximately 4,900 dogs were used during the war between 1964 and 1975. Records of the dogs in Vietnam where not maintained by the military prior to 1968, thus the discrepancy. How Many Dogs Returned Home? Only 204 dogs exited Vietnam during the 10-year period. Some remained in the Pacific, and some returned to the United States. None returned to civilian life. So, what happened to the dogs that remained? Most were euthanized and the others were turned over to the ARVN (South Vietnamese Army).

How Many Handlers Served in Vietnam and what Branch of Service? All four branches of the military used dogs in Vietnam. Approximately 10,000 handlers served. Vietnam was the largest concentrated effort of the use of dogs and handlers in any Combat Era the United States has ever undertaken. It is estimated that the dogs and handlers saved over 10,000 lives. The following is a breakdown of handlers by Military Branch that served in Vietnam. 65%Army 26%Air Force 7%Marine 2%Navy.

**Scout Dogs:** A Scout Dog Team consisted of one German Shepherd and the handler. When requested the Scout Dog Team joined an infantry unit and served as their "eyes and ears". The Scout Dog Team walked "point" (out front) for the unit, looking for booby traps, trip wires, ambushes, hidden caches of food or weapons, snipers etc. When the dog alerted, the handler passed the information to the patrol leader who then moved his troops forward. Scout dogs and handlers were trained at Ft. Benning, Ga. Some Scout Dog handlers were trained "In-Country" (OJT) or were originally trained as Tracker handlers.)

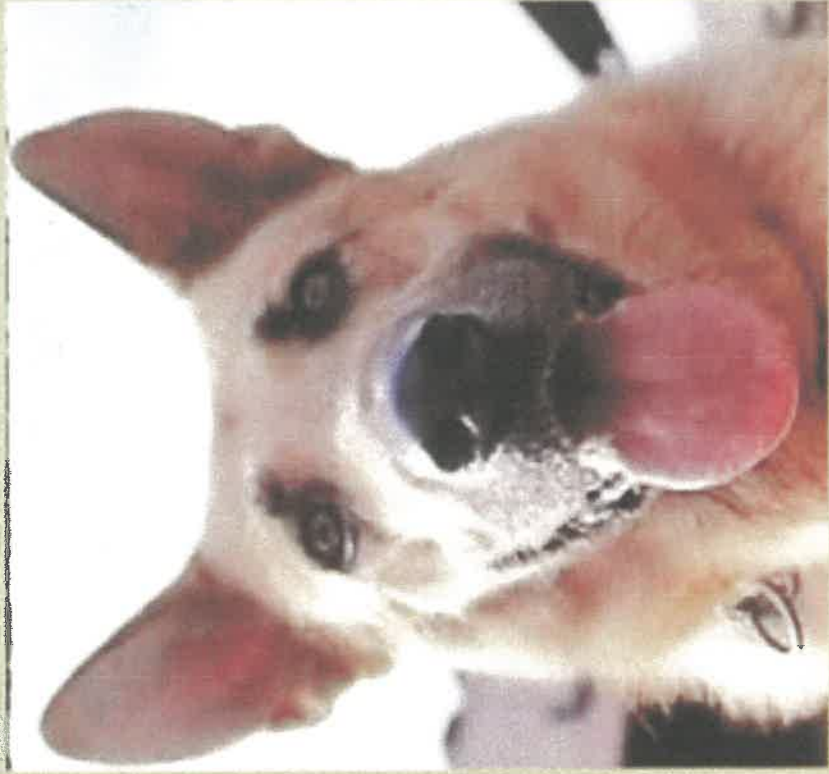
**Combat Tracker Teams (CTT):** The Tracker Team consisted of a Labrador Retriever (Sometimes Shepherds) and handler, a cover man, a Visual Tracker and a Team Leader. Trackers were called to duty when the unit wished to re-establish contact with the enemy. Tracker teams acted much like the old Indian Scouts (except for the use of the dogs). They were called upon to "track" either visually or by using a Labrador Retriever to follow ground (blood trails, body odor etc.) or airborne scent in order to locate missing personnel, i.e., downed pilots, wounded GI's, or the enemy. The Majority of Combat Trackers and Tracker Dogs were trained in Malaysia at the British Jungle Warfare School (JWS) or at Ft. Gordon, Ga. in the U.S.

### Sentry Dog Teams:

Sentry Dog Teams were universal within every branch of the U.S. Armed Forces in Vietnam to include the Air Force in Thailand; and were normally an arm of Military Police Units (All Branches had police units-they just called them different names). Sentry Dog Teams, "walked the wire" on the outskirts of a location and their primary form of communication was via radio after the dog alerted. Back up to the team was a tower or bunker guard, a quick response team, or getting illumination (flares). Sentry Dog Teams (K9) were comprised of one German Shepherd and one handler and generally worked at night (about 99%). Their mission was to "Detect, Detain, and Destroy."



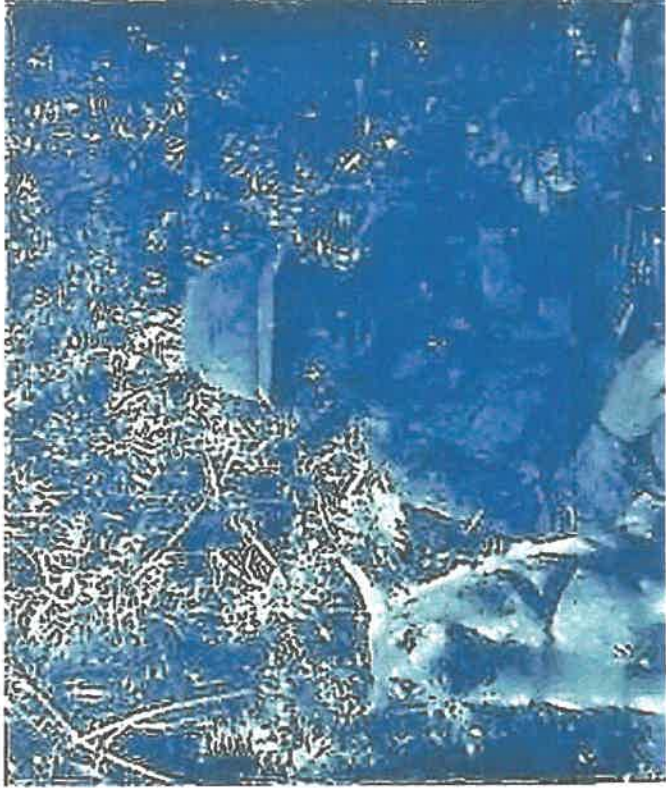
U.S. ARMY INFANTRY  
SCOUT DOG  
K-9 PRINCE  
VIETNAM 1970-1971







Sgt. Kehoe and Prince going out on first patrol in field



In the bush, taking a short rest from Charlie



Searching a creek in the jungle



Last hug together before Sgt. Kehoe leaves Vietnam, Prince euthanized 3 mos. later