

**War Dogs! Memorial**  
***Feelings and Thoughts***  
***I was at the War Dogs Memorial...***  
**A Dream Come True**  
by [Charlie Cargo](#)  
© 2000

I want to thank Jeff Bennett for all the time, effort and hard work he has done to have the War Dog memorial completed. We now have a place to visit and muse about our time with our dogs. It is more stunning than I ever imagined. Laura and Mo, you did a terrific job of getting the many things done so it would be such a success. To Tom Mitchell for the entire long days and nights you spent working out the many details for this monument and dedication.

The monument has a power and depth that I could never dreamed of. When I checked into the motel in Riverside I ran into Laura Bengel. She asked if I had seen it yet and I told her no. She said, "Charlie, don't go until tomorrow. You just need to wait until it's unveiled to get the full impact." On her advice I did just that. I visited with some other handlers in my room, and you could hear the rain as we talked about our wonderful dogs in Vietnam. My son Chris was getting a real education listening to us talk while he took some pictures of us.

Later that night, I walked out into the motel parking lot in the rain and remembered how wet Wolf and I always were in the Nam. Wolf seemed to work harder in the pounding rain trying to distinguish the sounds of the enemy from the rain hitting the jungle foliage, it was so noisy. I thought to myself, *I hope it pours tomorrow at the dedication.* What better way to honor and say good bye to Wolf than in the conditions he and I worked so well together in as a team?

During that sleepless night I thought about how patient Wolf had been with me when I was his new handler. I was the *new guy* and he was the seasoned Veteran in that forgotten land. Wolf worked so hard to teach me what he was trained to do. I stumbled along trying not to let him down. But when I screwed up and missed an alert, he would show me again until I caught on. Monday morning my son Chris, my friend Seth Hart whom I haven't seen for 30 years, and myself went to IHOP for breakfast. I felt numb. Knowing in a few hours I would see the final resting-place for Wolf. He had been my best friend, brother, teacher and my lifesaving companion in Vietnam. He was the reason so many others, and especially myself, were alive today.

At the dedication I tried to hold back the tears as I could tell many others were also trying to do. *Forget the Macho stuff*-- my heart just cried out for all of our lost dogs, as only dog handlers would truly understand and feel the terrible loss. As I approached the memorial and laid the rose on the handler's arm, I ran my hand across the face and nose of the dog. It felt so real to the touch. I reached up a little more and petted under the ears of the dog, just like Wolf had liked. I swear he winked at me just like Wolf used to do when he was telling me that everything was OK. It was like Wolf was saying *Thank You for remembering me.* No way to stop the tears... and I didn't even try. Every person I looked at was in tears and felt the same way. A stinking war 30 years ago had brought us all together, in a land 10,000 miles away, and now the same war had us all together in our free country of America to honor our dogs.

A very special thanks to all the people involved with the memorial for making a dream come true. All of you have done a terrific job with your efforts in this. Thanks to my good friend Jim Ower. Jim has felt the pain and kept it all inside of him up until last year when he saw the War Dogs movie on TV. We got together soon after that and have spent time trying to make each other feel better. Now we can feel a sense of ease, having a memorial we can go and pay our respects to in honor of "Wolf" and "Sam".

A extra special thanks to all the Law Enforcement agencies that came from different states to make our day a great one, and to say the "Welcome Home" to us vets, because we never got that welcome when we came home. These men and women didn't have to take their time to do this--it was all for free--and they all did it to help us get through this tough time. My good friend Eric Rimat, of the Santa Ana K-9 Police Department, is the person who put this together? He spent endless hours, days and weeks away from his family getting every last detail in place for this event. Eric knows the pain of loosing his K-9 partner. In the past Eric was shot while on the job, as was his dog "Indy". Eric almost died from his wounds and took quite a long time to recover. "Indy" didn't recover; he died two weeks later. Thank you, Eric. Charlie Cargo & "Wolf" 48th Scout Dog Platoon Vietnam 1970-1971.

er

*[We Take Care of Our Own](#)*  
[Click to Report BROKEN LINKS or Photos, or Comment](#)