

For Service and Valor
Left Behind...

*The simple fact is: American War Dogs were left behind in Vietnam
-- abandoned -- intentionally.*



Because of American War Dogs, thousands fewer names were etched in stone on



The Wall of the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial, at Constitutional Park, Washington, D.C.. Ironically, at the end of the Vietnam War, U.S. military officials *abandoned* almost all the War Dogs. **VDHA** writes:



"Of the 10,000 men who served with K-9 units during the Vietnam War, more than 265 were Killed in Action. Of the 4,000 War Dogs that served, 281 were "Officially" listed as "Killed in Action", but only 190 were returned home at the end of the war. Over 500 dogs died on the battlefields of Vietnam (injuries, illnesses, combat wounds)." Nevertheless, there has been no tribute to these dogs until the *Discovery Channel* program, sponsored by *Nature's Recipe*, as envisioned and promoted by the **Vietnam Dog Handler Association to raise the memorial's \$1,500,000!**

Tom Mitchell

Is Vietnam the first time our American war animals have been treated so disgracefully by the military? Unfortunately, no:

"At the end of the American cavalry era, the Army disposed of its horses by machine gunning them to death. In our [Vietnam] war, the dogs were treated the same way. Only it was done in a more 'humane' manner. Some excess dogs were reassigned to other bases in the Pacific but most were killed. The US military has pledged not to dispose of military working dogs in such a manner again."

Monty Moore, VSPA K-9 Webmaster.

The double-injustice for final disposition of War Dogs often entailed the active and mandatory participation of the dog's handler (especially Sentry Dogs of the Air Force). After all, no one else could "handle" the dog without incurring injury or death. The handler would be required to hold his dog, watch the needle be inserted into the animal's veins, and then feel him die in his arms. How many handlers have stressed for decades over participation in killing their own dog--and still feel they betrayed a friend? To better understand exactly what happened to both dog and handler during a War Dog's last moments of life (and immediately afterward), please read *Death of a Warrior*, by SSgt Cathy J. Moore (former dog handler and PACAF Military Working Dog Training Center Instructor).

Those handlers and men who served with War Dogs will never forget their friendship and selfless valor. It is hoped that our nation will long remember the many American lives War Dogs have saved, and never again abandon *mankind's best friend* on the fields of battle. The War Dogs Monument is a small, but important, step toward atonement for calloused ingratitude for long and faithful service by military animals.

The first War Dogs Memorials was unveiled on Presidents' Day, February 21, 2000, at March Air Field, Riverside, California, to honor the service and sacrifice of American War Dogs. The second War Dogs Memorial will be at Ft. Benning's Infantry Museum, on the east coast, in New Jersey.

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