

War Dogs! Memorial

Feelings and Thoughts

I was at the War Dogs Memorial...

I Touched Buddy, Once Again...

by [John Stark](#)

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I want to thank everyone for all of the hard work making the memorial a reality. I also want to thank all of the members of the VFW who made us feel so welcome and comfortable.

While standing and waiting for the memorial to be unveiled and watching the honor guards from other agencies march in, the long forgotten came back. As one of the dog teams passed I turned to my wife and said, "That dog looks like Buddy." I walked over to the handler and introduced myself telling him his dog looks just like my service dog. The handler said, "You can pet him if you like." I gave the dog a pat or three and thanked him for being there.

Then came the unveiling and the handlers were asked to come forward and place a rose on the memorial. With rose in hand, waiting to move forward, memories of the last two hours I spent with Buddy came back. *I remembered sitting next to him in his kennel telling him he would be getting another handler, for him to take care of, who would love him as I did. I could feel his fur as I groomed him for the last time. The final hugs, his lick on my cheek along with his cold wet nose.* Waiting still to move forward, I remembered the vision of Buddy sitting there... watching me walk away for the last time.

These memories all came back, stronger than ever. Finally, I moved forward and placed the rose and touched the cold wet nose of Buddy once again.

Buddy you are not forgotten, you have now come home. Welcome Home.

John Stark,
Phan Rang, 1965-1966

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