

Dear 216th members,

10-25-2007

Before I forget (just kidding, it has been 23 years since this very memorable incident), *“did you know”* the story behind the brotherhood of the trap?

Well as the president and still owner of a rusty steel trap used for catching small animals, I had to take it off the front leg of a wild dog to start the tradition. It happened in September 1984, fall became my favorite season after seeing all the gorgeous colors outside of Elmendorf AFB. Wolves became my favorite animal; Alaska touched my senses to say the least! I was a young lineman of 3 years; my two week annual training was to be served in Alaska where I had never been before. I remember Bobby Garcia was the man in charge of installing three inverted discone antennas. Each antenna required a clearing of the thick brush prior to our arrival. We had to drill six holes for the six poles that would form each antenna, we had to set 18 poles and I believe they were 50 feet tall so the views on top were outstanding. It was very hard work but we still played hard which was our motto every job we were tasked. Back then I was able to run 10 miles in an hour fairly easily, I was almost 23 years old and I was having the kind of fun that our unit was famous for. It was common in Alaska while working to hear noises in the thick tundra, if you looked close enough sometimes you could see moose 15 feet away. One day after our normal 10 hour day we were all cleaning up and three dogs shot out of the tundra like they were being chased, they were all wild and scared. The lead dog was running on 3 legs with a trap cutting through his fourth leg, I dropped everything and I took off after this dog, good thing I still had my work gloves on. I yelled at the dog to let me help him the entire time I chased him through the thick tundra which seemed like an hour. I knew I could chase him until he could no longer run, finally he collapsed and I had to take the trap off with only one hand and two feet because he had my other hand in his mouth like someone would bite a leather strap or stick when in pain. By the time I got it off his leg and I looked up he

was gone from view as if it was a dream but yet I had a bloody trap in my hand which still had hair and skin attached. I walked out of that tundra and found a road I hoped would take me back to the base which was still 6 to 8 miles away. I will never forget how relieved I was to see Vavrock driving back to get me after everyone else had already gone back to the base and by time we arrived they were primed to hit the town. I ended up in Decker's room to show him the trap and next thing I know he was licking that rusty, bloody, and hairy trophy of mine. By time we left, I too licked it; Chief White, Bobby Garcia, and Bernie Graff were the original five members of the brotherhood of the trap. Every year after that at Christmas time we would pour Yukon Jack over the trap and more and more people would lick that trap enlarging our membership. We never actually had any women lick the trap but Janine Garcia brought back some hat pins for the original five from Alaska which was perfect. The pin was a small trap and somehow Steve Meyers was given Bernie's pin, he once said that it meant more to him than all his medals from Vietnam. That was a magical trip and I will always be grateful to the men and women of the 216th who gave deep meaning to the word comradery.

Sincerely,

Retired MSGT Dane Takeo Bishari