



K9 - Kinsey, Black Labrador
August 2000 - January, 2007
Handler – Bob Deeds - TX TF-1
FEMA Certified – January 2002

Many of you are already aware of this but I have not looked at any of my emails yet, so I can't tell who is or is not. I made the decision, yesterday (Sunday, Jan 7th, 2007), to put Kinsey down. She was in a training accident at Disaster City. Kinsey fell 15 or 20 feet off the top of a training structure, landing on her back and breaking it. The vet at TX A&M told us recent studies of dogs with this type of fracture had had zero percent chance of ever walking again. If I had elected to try, it would have been for me, not for her. Even if she walked with minimal success, it would never give her any quality of life she deserved...The odds were she wouldn't walk at all. The decision was easy. The pain is hard.

We as handlers are the most blessed group of human beings on the face of the earth. As I've often told my pet dog clients, "I'm a grown man, I get paid to play with dogs all day long, and it doesn't get any better than that". Well, today is not one of the good days. My partner is gone. She deployed to seven federal deployments in her career. She also deployed on a large number of deployments as a volunteer. She did everything I

asked and more. She taught me everything I know about how to handle a dog. I showed her the search and rescue game, but training and handling are not the same and she was ever patient until I finally figured out my roll. She helped train my task force and helped show rescue guys from other parts of the world what a search and rescue dog could do. These last few years have been a blast. She knew her job and I knew to trust her. She was the picture you find by the definition of a search and rescue dog in the dictionary. She was my partner and friend. In New York, Kinsey was one of the recipients of the PDSA Dickens Medal for Gallantry (the highest gallantry award for animals in the world). Just this year, she got inducted into the Tarrant County Veterinary Medical Association "Hall of Fame". She remained brave to the end. When it was time, she kissed my hand, closed her eyes, and went to sleep. She didn't fight it. She was on to the next adventure.

There was a version of the "Rainbow Bridge" that came out after 9/11 about dogs greeting Fire Fighters and Police Officers that died at the World Trade Center, as they passed over the rainbow bridge. Well today, I hope they are there to return the favor. I pray they take good care of her. I was once asked by another handler, referring to Kinsey, "Do you know what you have, here?" I answered I was starting to understand. I didn't have a clue. I learned over time. I do know now. Love your dog, love what you do, and remember it can go away in a heartbeat.

Bob Deeds, Forever "Owned" by K-9 Kinsey
Texas - Task Force One, FEMA
Search One Rescue Team

Kinsey 's story is not in her death, but what she did in life...

I got Kinsey in August of 2000 from DFW-LR (Dallas-Fort Worth - Lab Rescue). Kinsey was found on an elementary school play ground in Grand Prairie, TX. She had been hanging around for four or five days. A teacher finally called her friend at DFW-LR , when Kinsey began to play a little too vigorously with moving balls during recess. A gal from DFW-LR came to the school and picked up this dog which was flea/tic infested and emaciated. As she walked away with Kinsey, the school children hollered, "Hey Lady, Don't kill our dog!" She promised to find her a good home. They put her in a veterinary kennel for a month to rehab than sent her to her first foster family. She lasted less than 24 hours. ...Another foster home, a third, then a fourth, only lasting 48 hours at her longest stint. They always brought her back to the kennel because, "she was crazy". DFW-LR knew I was looking for a disaster dog. US Customs had shown interest but were dragging their feet. I got the call and picked her up for a test drive. She was a big, beautiful black girl. She was muscular, lean with a massive barrel chest, and the biggest feet God ever put on a dog. She had droopy lab eyes, which on closer inspection,

always bore a mischievous glint. (This glint never went away even on the direst mission, no matter her level of exhaustion.) She was magnificent.

I had been out of town the three days prior to picking her up, and since I lived in the country, I needed to take advantage of this time in the city. I picked her up and took her to a buddy's home a few miles away. The plan was to put her in his kennel run while I ran errands. Upon entering his back yard, I found a red Kong toy on the pave stone by his pool. I decided to see how well the dog swam so I kicked it into the water, not realizing that only blue Kongs floated. Oops... It promptly sank and Kinsey, who had more promptly jumped in, proceeded to chase it to the bottom of the pool. "Great", I thought, "I just drowned this dog!" I pulled off my shirt, kicked off my shoes, and dropped my pants to my ankles. Meanwhile, she had retrieved it from bottom and swam up to the edge of the pool where she placed her massive paws on the side of the pool, and with shear strength, she pulled herself up. I was so happy to see her alive, I failed to retreat away from the shower I received from the shaking dog. So here I was, standing there, soaking wet, in my briefs, pants to my ankles, in a residential neighborhood backyard in Euless, TX. Thank God there was a privacy fence and my buddy and his wife were not at home.

Later that evening, I took her to my home in Burleson, TX. As I said, I lived in the country. I pulled up to my house, opened the crate door to attach a leash, planning to take her to an outdoor kennel run. I never let new dog come right into the house, until I made sure my cat and other dogs were out of conflict range. As I was hooking her up on lead, I could hear my home phone start ringing. I didn't want to miss the call, so I grabbed a tennis ball to keep her occupied. With, these dogs that do detection, in most cases if you have a toy you have total control. We entered the house; she walked over my cat and never looked twice. I answered the phone, sat on the sofa, and immediately began "clunking" the ball in her mouth. ("Clunking", is the sound that occurs when you throw a ball directly into the waiting mouth of a Labrador Retriever. Anyone who has ever owned a lab knows the sound.) I "clunked" it once, she spat in my lap...Twice, and she spat it in my lap. Three, four, five times... On the six "clunk", things went south. The ball bounced off her head and went between my entertainment center and the wall. Kinsey went for it. Her head didn't fit in the four inch gap between the wall and the entertainment center. It fell forward crashing to the carpet, hitting with so much force that my 57" TV literally exploded. Sparks flew. Fire appeared from under the side nearest me. I threw the phone down and ran to the kitchen, retrieving a fire extinguisher. I pulled the pin, aimed, and began to depress the trigger. Kinsey, who until now was dancing on the back of the TV with ball in her mouth, seized the opportunity for an impromptu game of tug-o-war. She grabbed the rubber nozzle of the fire extinguisher and started to pull. Since the handle and trigger were combined, the trigger depressed even further. Fire retardant began to spray wherever Kinsey pointed the nozzle...All over my den, everywhere except the fire. The fire extinguisher was depleted. The fire grew. Kinsey ripped the extinguisher from my hands and began to shake it like she was killing a rabbit, all the while, beating the metal cylinder against her head. I was frantically laughing and choking on a mix of smoke and fire retardant. She went back to the tennis ball and again danced triumphantly on the back of my TV. The fire grew. I ran to the bathroom, grabbed two towels, and dipped them in the toilet. I ran back to the electrical fire and began to beat it with the wet towels,

expecting any moment to be electrocuted. I was able to get the fire out, but not before Kinsey grabbed one of the towels and began to put it through its death throws. I sat back, dazed, on the arm of the sofa. Kinsey, realizing I was no longer in "the game", picked up the tennis ball and tossed at me hitting me square in the face. I looked at the shamble that used to be my house, looked at the delighted Kinsey, now repeatedly using my face and chest as a backboard, and realized I'd gotten exactly what I wanted. I had a disaster dog.

Kinsey taught me everything I know about handling a dog. She gave me opportunities I would have never had, had she not entered my life. One year and two weeks after we started with Texas - Task Force One, one year and a month after she tried to burn my house down, we were called on our first mission. It was September 11, 2001. We were being called to search for survivors of the collapse of the pentagon. By the time I got to College Station, where the task force is based, our mission had been changed to the World Trade Center. I had always wanted to serve my country. I grew up after the end of the Viet Nam war and felt guilty that I had never served. Now was my chance. I was issued my uniform. I put on my BDU top and I have to admit tears rolled down my cheeks as I looked at the American Flag patch sewn above the breast pocket. Kinsey, who was sitting in front of me, responded by licking away the tears. She always licked away my tears.

I trained her in a year. We passed our basic certification but it took her a few years to get me through the advanced, Type I, test. Training was a blast. She was so much fun. A video of her initial assessment, by TX - TF 1, was taken to Turkey. It was used to show the Turkish National USAR (urban search and rescue) team what a disaster dog looked like. I got to help teach several British USAR teams at Texas A & M's, Disaster City, where TX - TF 1 is based. We were used to show how a disaster dog team should be utilized in a disaster environment. I got to travel all over the US to train and to go on missions. We were at the WTC, Utah for the 2002 Winter Olympics, Tropical Storm Erika, Hurricanes Ivan, Dennis, Katrina, Rita, and Ernesto. In NY, I always tell people that Kinsey was 25% search dog and 75% therapy dog. I will always remember the image of the NYC fire fighter who came up, knelt putting his forehead on Kinsey's and cried, tears dripping from her ears. That image is burned in my soul and I get teary eyed writing about it. I had to ask her many times to put her life at risk and she never, ever wavered, even the slightest amount. The missions were not fun, but traveling to train was a blast. I got to meet some great people that would have never come up to talk to me, had it not been for Kinsey. She loved to travel. On the plane, all 80 lbs of her could curl up small enough to fit under the seat in front of me. People would often give up there spot in First Class so Kinsey would have more room. Iams Imaging paid for us to have an MRI done every year, as precaution, because of all the toxins she was exposed to at the WTC. One of these was in Washington, D.C., and we got to walk along the plaza up to the White House. A group of Marines, all assigned to Presidential Detail, were playing football on the plaza. One of them was sidelined with ice on a purple swollen ankle. We stopped to chat and Kinsey was all over the young Marine. She caught sight of the moving football and almost pulled me off my feet. The Marine said, "Sir, I'll pay you to let her go!" I refused payment but did set her loose and Kinsey went head first into the game...Touch became tackle. She had a great time. The Marines all came over to say hello. Kinsey thought it was all about her...I guess it was. The last trip we took was an MRI trip to Redwood City, CA. I have a

friend who lives near Carmel, so before I flew back, we took a day and went to the beach. Kinsey owned the beach! At least she owned every toy on the beach. She was so tired that night...She was down for the night by 7:00 p.m.

Kinsey had an effect on almost every area of my life. My wife, I met because of Kinsey. When we got married, Karen said she felt like the "other woman" for a while, until Kinsey let her have a place in my life. My career change from the business I grew up in to the jump to full time dog trainer was due to Kinsey. Since the business pays for our house, I'd have to say Kinsey had a hand in the house we live in. (I have to add, Kinsey became the near perfect house dog, with the privileges she had earned.) My wife is a Regional Training Contractor for Paws with a Cause. A lot of the puppies that have been raised by Karen's puppy raisers were first raised by Kinsey who was always stern, but fair.

I could go on forever. I miss her. I've started training a Lab that came from DFW-LR, also. Her name is Gracie. She is doing well. I still sometimes call her name, but it comes out, "Kinsey". I thought about quitting when Kinsey got killed, but I realized, if I did, she would have died for nothing. When I first got Kinsey I told my boss, on the task force, it was all business. She was a working dog, a tool, and I would never become attached to her. Yea, right... I miss her. I love her. She won my heart.

The following is an email I got from a client, now friend, named Cindy Oates. Her father is motivational speaker Zig Ziegler. Cindy's words say a lot about who Kinsey was and still is.

----- Original Message -----

Bob,

My heart breaks with yours and Karen's. There are no words to tell you how sorry I am for the loss of your incredible partner. When I first met you and learned that you and Kinsey had been involved in the search and rescue at 911, I thought I heard wrong. To actually meet a team that had done such an incredible act of courage putting your lives on the line for people like me, well, I just couldn't fathom that. As I got to know you and Kinsey better, I heard more stories about the incredible things that the two of you had done. What an honor that I was able to meet a team that most people only read about or seen on TV. It means more to me to have known the two of you than to have met the President or anyone on that level. Kinsey deserves a purple heart. She literally gave her life preparing for the next disaster. There are no words to express the gratitude that I feel toward her or you. Bob, to say thank you for what you two have done is not

enough. There are scriptures in the Bible that say that we will get extra jewels in our crowns by the good works that we do here on earth. Well, Kinsey will have those extra jewels and I guarantee you that she was met by all of the fireman and policeman and search and rescue dogs that had crossed the bridge before her. Here's the best part and I know you already know this. When you and Karen go to heaven, Kinsey will be waiting there for you. Psalm 36:6 says, ".....Oh, Lord thou preservest man and beast." That will be a glorious day, won't it?

Losing a dog is always so hard and tragic. When I lost Emmitt, my last therapy dog, my grief was deeper than I ever expected. In a way, it was actually harder to lose him than it was when I lost my sister eleven years ago. I had a lot of guilt over feeling that way but I finally figured out why. I was with Emmitt 24-7. He was my partner. He taught me everything I knew about the world of therapy dogs. Many people tried to console me about my loss but didn't really understand the working relationship that I had with my dog. They meant well but just didn't "get it". I talked to my girlfriend about the loss of her service dog. She lost even more than I did. Her companion was with her literally every minute of every day and was her very arms and legs. Then there's you and Kinsey. The greatest loss of all is when a partner and his companion put their very lives on the line for people like me. All the training, traveling, risks and injuries that go along with a commitment like yours are unfathomable to people like me. We will never know the fear, the stress, and the sadness of finding bodies in the unmentionable shape that I know you found them in. Only you and Kinsey knew how horrifying it all was. No one will ever truly understand the depth of your loss. I hope that in time every time you feel the tears coming when you are missing your precious partner, that you will be able to thank God for such a once in a life time incredible gift and remember all of the missions and adventures that you and your partner shared for all of those years. I can't think of anybody more deserving of such a gift than you, Bob. I am so grateful that Kinsey was rescued and lived her life out with the best partner she could have ever been paired with. You two saved and touched more lives than you will ever know. God used you and Kinsey in a way most of us will never ever experience or begin to understand. I am so blessed to have had the honor to know Kinsey and meet a true hero. I was able to touch her, to see her and watch her incredible drive that made her the champion that she was and still is. I loved watching her crawl very slowly and slyly inching up to you in class when you put her on a down stay. And what a clown when she would roll over on her back for a good scratch. The smile on your face when you would look over and see your brilliant dog just being a dog. I will treasure those moments and those memories for the rest of my life. Thank you, Bob, for sharing Kinsey with us and with the world. You are my hero. Kinsey is my hero.

With much love to you and Karen,
Cindy

**Bob Deeds & K-9 Gracie
Canine Search Specialist
Texas - Task Force One
FEMA**

...Forever Owned by K-9 Kinsey