

The

Borden Star

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A Boy, His Dog and Some Angels Among Us

When Adam Carter graduated from Borden High School in 2005, he knew—as much as an 18-year-old can know—that his hometown was a supportive community and that his alma mater had given him a solid education. That was about the extent of what any young person realizes before heading off to that proverbial “next chapter” of his or her life.

Adam’s path of choice would be the United States Marine Corps. His service to his country included two tours of duty in a five-year enlistment: the first to Iraq (seven and a half months) and the other to Afghanistan (six months). This past May, Adam completed his Marine Corps enlistment and headed home to Gail America, intent on enrolling in college to obtain a degree in Exercise and Sports Science.

This information alone would make for a newsworthy feature. However, the layers to this story are worth peeling back. Adam, in true Paul Harvey fashion, wants Borden County to know the rest of the story.

You see, all those years that Adam was away from Borden County, he wasn’t alone. After his basic training in California, Adam attended specialized training in the Marine Corps K-9 field. In Peru, In-

diana, at the Vohne Liche Kennels, Adam met the companion that would stay with him throughout the remainder of his five-year military career. Rex, a Belgian Malinois, was trained as a combat tracking dog. During his own military service, he was partnered with no one other than Adam.

So what would become of Rex when Adam retired from the Corps? He was returned to Camp LeJeune in Jacksonville, North Carolina, one of

three base camps used for Marine Corps canines. The boy and his dog were separated after years of not only a working relationship but a personal bond.

“Rapport,” as Adam refers to it in typical military fashion: this word describes what a boy and his dog had to have to survive war. And while Marines may have the earned reputation of being the tough-

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A Rest in the Shade

Marine and Borden County graduate, Adam Carter is pictured with Rex, his friend and combat tracking dog. They served together in the Marines for five years. Adam has since adopted Rex.

Marine and K-9 Friend Finally Come Home...

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est guys on the planet, even they recognize that *rapport* is just a technical word for love and trust.

This past June, Adam came home without Rex. He went to work for Joel and Betty Dennis, planning to spend the summer in Borden County before moving to Lubbock in August to enroll in college. Then, the phone call.

"Two months and four days" but who's counting? Adam was. That is how long it had been since Adam said good-bye to Rex. The call, however, informed Adam that Rex was going to be honorably discharged into Adam's care. The only catch was that Adam had to pick up his canine pal at Camp LeJeune.

Enter the Angels, all of them, beginning with Joel and Betty. Betty, a seasoned American Airlines flight attendant, immediately knew what to do. Her contacts included Tanya Pinkos, an American Airlines employee, who followed Betty's lead and got the ball rolling for an amazing reunion. Tanya's efforts included finding the best way to work within the guidelines for animal travel.

Adam hoped to initially fly Rex into Lubbock, but because of the extremely hot summer, all airlines into Lubbock had a cautionary hold on pet travel. Dallas was also out as an option. Tanya and Betty would not be deterred.

After much negotiating, American Airlines agreed to fly Rex to Houston, so Adam made plans to just drive there to get Rex. Betty, however, had a better idea. She called her American supervisor and made arrangements for Adam to fly to Raleigh, North Carolina, pick up Rex there, and then return with Rex to Abilene.

And if that wasn't enough, Rex got to fly coach. In the cabin. With Adam.

That's right. Rex the Dog got the window seat.

Told you there were angels in this story.

When Adam and Rex arrived in Abilene on August 20, a television news crew was on location for some breaking news. Betty seized the moment to tell them about another human interest feature. KTXS, an Abilene ABC affiliate, caught the homecoming as Betty and Denise, Adam's mother, held up signs welcoming both guys.

It just gets better. Katy Jeter, the daughter of an American Airline employee, contacted dog food company Hill's Science Diet. Because Rex is on a special urinary diet, the company offered Adam and Rex a year's supply of the special Science Diet dog food made for such a condition.

The boy Adam is now reunited with the dog Rex. Their angels from Borden County and from American Airlines are smiling, pleased that they had the opportunity to serve two guys who served an entire nation.

Rex and Adam have gone from the desert to the plains, from mountain caves to hanging out at Sonic, from sleeping on the ground to lounging on soft couches.

"How thankful I am to both Joel and Betty," said Adam. "Joel took me on for a job, Betty did all of the leg work, and they completely took care of all the arrangements to make this happen." Needless to say, American Airlines gets a well-deserved tip of the hat as well.

Five years after his high school graduation, Adam is safely home from war and looks forward to facing another "next chapter" with Rex, and plenty of guardian angels, at his side.



Got News?

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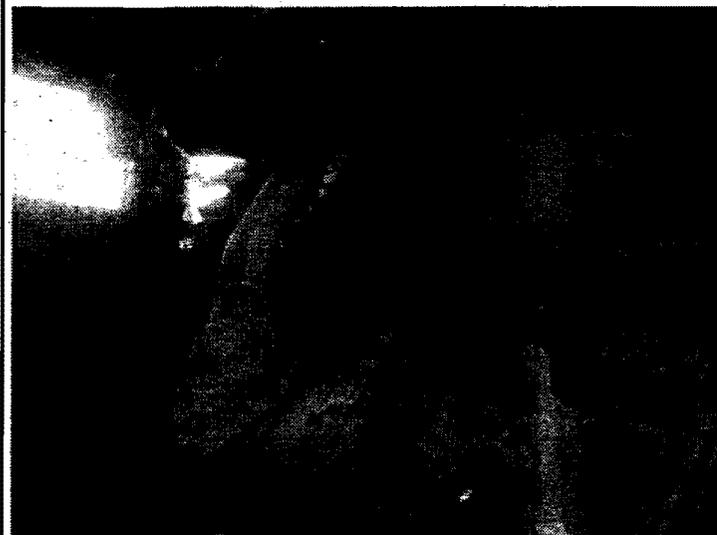
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or call

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K-9 Friendship



Marine, Adam Carter, gets some shut eye with K-9 partner, Rex. Rex received an honorable discharge after an injury in the military and is now in the