

Features

"Hopi" Holds A Place of Honor in a Military Veteran's Heart

As told by GCH CH Schofield Headliner Hopi ("Hopi")

In 2008 I became friends with James (Jim) Morris of Phoenix, Arizona, who came to visit me and my family in Las Vegas, Nevada three to four times per year. We had many pictures taken together. During Jim's visits he would take me for walks and we bonded.

Before I get further into my story, let me give you a bit of information about Jim Morris. He was a very special person in both my "dad's" (Robert Schmidt) and my lives. Born in 1922, Jim enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1944 where he flew 32 missions in a B-17 Bomber out of England during World War II. This was serious business for our country's sake. The picture above shows a B-17 escorted by B-52s. Jim is pictured below with eight of his other flight comrades.



Jim was born and raised in Valley Junction, Iowa and, after his military career, became a professional auctioneer and for 18 years also worked at the Des Moines Register Tribune in advertising. He was an Assistant Secretary of the Iowa State Fair, he developed Teen Town, worked for Gulf America Corp. (Cape Coral, Florida development), assisted in developing Fountain Hills, AZ., for McCoulough Corp., opened the first real estate office in Fountain Hills, AZ and was the founder of "Buy from Owner Realty."

August 2013 | Issue #714 | www.gscg.org

At the age of 88 Jim's health started failing, so his trips to Las Vegas to see me were limited. It was in July of 2012 that I received my Therapy Dog certification. On occasion my dad and I went to Phoenix to see Jim when he no longer could make the trip to Las Vegas.

On March 27, 2013, Jim's wife Carol called and said Jim was in the Veterans' Home in Phoenix, AZ, confined to a wheel chair and pretty much bed-ridden. Carol told my dad that Jim sure would like me to come and see him. That very day my dad prepared for our trip to Phoenix. The next day we left early, arrived 11:00 a.m., and spent the day with Jim in the Veterans' Home. We had a great visit and also had the opportunity to visit



Robert Schmidt (left) and Hopi visit Jim in the Veterans' home many other military veterans while we there. Most of them have never visited with a Gordon Setter before!

On June 12th we received the sad email from Jim's wife telling us that at 1:30 p.m. her beloved Jim and our good friend had said

"goodbye" and went to heaven. Carol asked if my dad and I could attend Jim's service at the National Memorial Cemetery in Cave Creek Arizona, July 1st. Her second request was for me to carry a United States of America flag for Jim's Memorial Service. Because dogs are not allowed in the National Memorial Cemetery, a special request was granted and I witnessed



Hopi carrying the flag





the complete ceremony which included the Honor Guard giving a 21 gun salute, the un-folding, refolding and presentation of the United States of America Flag to Jim's wife Carol. We then presented the U.S. Flag that I carried to Carol. The ceremony also included eulogies by the VFW Commander and Jim's long-time pastor friend. Carol introduced me and my dad to everyone present and gave mention of our relationship with Jim. She also

mentioned that it was my dad who introduced Jim to her 42 years ago, and the rest is history. She stated that the past 42 years were the best part of her life, knowing and being married to Jim. It was a very sobering but eventful experience. During the entire ceremony, a National cemetery flag was flying at half mast.

To all my fellow Black and Tans, remember that there can be a beautiful and meaningful life after we become Champions and Grand Champions. I love my job as a Certified Therapy Gordon Setter Dog, visiting dog lovers in hospitals and nursing homes. It is very rewarding for the patients to lay their hands on me and talk to me—pretty nice for me too!

Sincerely, Hopi
Owned by
Robert Schmidt (NV)

