

## Care of Australian Shepherd Foundation and History Group on Facebook

### Thoughts from Phil Wildhagen – Flintridge

One thought I have is that I look at my old Dusty's painting on the wall above our TV every day and after this re-kindling of aussiedom, it made me think of one unique thing he has. Did everybody know that Dusty is an "honorary Private in the U. S. Army's 11th Signal Group"??? Yes, he was formally awarded a plaque at the close of their support for Service Action "Exotic Dancer IV" in February 1971 by the group's Commander, Lt. Gen. Adams. I was a civilian contractor asked to support the event as I was the project engineer for a large communications system they used and was a technical observer. Yes, Dusty came along and wandered around with me all over the place. He became the mascot of the event for the troops.

Terry did list some of the crazy things I would up doing when I discovered aussies back in 1967. I adopted a dog (Sam) from the pound and someone said they thought he was part Australian Shepherd. "What's that"???? And you now know where that went! I contacted ASCA in Arizona at the time and they were kind enough to give me a bunch of names of folks that had aussies, so my 1/2 brother & I took this trip. We went all over the west coast and wound up in Colorado. The people I met said I should go over and see Dr. Heard's dogs before I left.....and that's where it all started. Dusty was a 10 week old pup and a couple of weeks later after I got home from Mexico, he was shipped to me. More later..... (this was in 1969)

Continuing my thoughts on this breed, back in the late 60s, we had ASCA, IASA, the Stockdog Registry and of course, Tom D. Stodghill's Animal Research Foundation to recognize aussies. Many wanted more such as AKC, FCI, etc., but they wouldn't talk to us!!! I did visit with the AKC in NY in early 1972 and gave them a briefing on the breed and that's as far as it went. Our family moved back to CA in early 1974 and we continued exhibiting our dogs, but no added recognition occurred even though ASCA had some written communications with AKC with no positive vibes. In 1976, Dorothy Fromer (Pabst) and our family attended a fun match held by Asociación Canofila Baja California in Ensenada. There were a few other aussies there also. Our judge was Thelma Von Thaden, President of the Mexican Kennel Club (ACM). After the event, I had a good discussion with her and returned home to provide her with a brochure about the breed (I was a member of the Board at the time). About 2 months later, the ACM formally granted recognition of the breed, the first international recognition of the breed. More later.

We were living in Sudbury, MA beginning in 1971 and soon met Georjean Goldman and Jerry & Kathy Robinson. Also, we were invited to show our aussies in a Ladies Dog Club fun match where my Dusty was allowed to exhibit in the Herding Group after he won the breed. Our judge was Rachel Page Elliott (author of Dogsteps and producer of the AKC film on dog conformation). She asked us to return to her home the following week where our dogs ran her cows around a bit. She then filmed my Dusty who became the focus dog in her AKC film on conformation. This film was used for many years. Shortly thereafter, the Goldmans, Robinsons and a few others met at Richard Lownes' home in Rhode Island where we founded ASCNE which is very much alive today. This was in the early 70s. I was elected to the ASCA BOD in the late 70s, but don't remember any earth shaking work we did at that time. While in MA, I worked for Raytheon and did some travel. One was to a military exercise called Coronet Organ 9 held in New Mexico. While on that trip, I took Dusty and we stopped in Dallas to compete in the ASC of TX's first show where he won the breed. We were allowed to show in the Herding Group at the AKC match being

held in the same building, but they didn't look at us!!!! In 1974, we moved back to Canoga Park, CA where I joined the Aerospace Corporation, a government "think tank". (to be continued)

When in MA, a group of our ASCNE folk went down to Rhode Island to participate in the Associated Rare Breeds of New England match. Our Dusty & Thistle won the breed placements BOB & BOS and my Dusty went on to Best in Match. I think that was in 1973. After returning to CA, I had ASCA BOD time in the late 70s and in the 80s. I already discussed my activity in gaining breed recognition in Mexico in 1976, however, the breed had grown considerably in the late 80s and Canada affiliates finally wanted CKC recognition in 1989. There was a problem, though, the CKC was considering recognizing the breed as the American Shepherd as it was considered an American breed. ASCA took on the task and I was given the JOB!!! I contacted the Australian National Kennel Council and gave them a detailed history of the breed including their acknowledgement of these dogs in their book on Australian Breeds in 1941. A month or so later, I received a letter from them allowing permanent use of the breed name Australian Shepherd. The CKC adopted that name with their recognition. 2 years later, some "telephone club" applied for AKC recognition and achieved it as the AKC had financial issues and adopted a number of breeds at that time. Over the years, I was allowed to judge the breed throughout the US and Canada, however, I have stepped down from that activity a number of years ago. It was great to see old friends at the Nationals this year and hope you can continue your aussie activities for many years to come.