

GUNDOG

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November 6, 2007

“Gundog” is simply the greatest honor that can be bestowed upon a dog; a far greater honor than champion, champion of the field, or grand champion. A gundog can be any breed, sex, color, or size. A gundog is not always the biggest or fastest, but a gundog is always the most loyal, a confidant, a refuge, and a window in time.

A gundog retrieves on three legs with the fourth dangling. A gundog sits for hours in frozen sleet waiting for the flight. A gundog will collapse from exhaustion and still lick the hand that drove him to it. A gundog drags back the goose that is larger than himself. A gun dog sometimes fails but never quits. A gun dog always knows but never tells.

I have seen a gundog, just a pup, in a fight to the death to protect his young master. I have seen a gundog that was left behind wait for hours, days, and weeks for his master’s return. I have seen a gundog being physically hauled outside for she wouldn’t willingly leave the side of her ailing master. I have seen a gundog jump out the window of a moving vehicle rather than be taken away.

A gundog puppy turns the most stoic of men into a child again. A gundog puppy can lift the permanent frown with a simple lick and ease the fears of the night with their presence.

I have gotten something in my eye while watching an old gundog make an arthritic retrieve. I have seen the strongest of men to weak to walk after burying a gundog, and in the night I have tripped over a gundog’s spirit years after he was gone.

Gundogs rest in unmarked graves in grassy meadows all around the world, under small wooden crosses in rural America, and beside mammoth granite tombstones on the lawns of the well healed. They live in our hearts, dreams and memories long after they have gone. The passing of a gundog makes us never want another, for death is a gundog’s only fault.