



Memorial Vase Holder

This is Kitana alerting at a historical grave. She is pointing to the location where the memorial vase would have been placed. It was very common for historic grave markers or the concrete pad that covered family plots to have a recessed hole where a vase could be placed. Most historic graves no longer have the vase, most likely because of vandals or it getting broken. The recessed hole collects water after rain or from cemeteries that are watered. Scent is always strongest near water. Not only does a hole trap scent but water also brings out the scent. When we work the dogs on historic graves they will usually alert on cracks or the vase hole.

A Community Project Takes Many Paths

Every couple of years Lynne and Adela travel to Texas to work with our long-time friend, Russ Skowronek, who is a professor of history and anthropology at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). UTRGV has an award-winning Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools (CHAPS) program. The CHAPS program takes on projects that are meaningful to the surrounding community. In addition to giving presentations to student groups, they joined Russ and his team, Carina Marques, Roseann Bacha-Garza and Juan Gonzalez, in their community projects.

The Search for Pvt. Robison's Remains

This year one of our projects was to attempt to locate the remains of Pvt.

James Robison in Rio Hondo. Triple digit temperatures postponed our initial survey in 2017 and, in 2022 we were met with driving rain, gale-force winds and thick Texas mud. Again, not ideal conditions for locating an almost 80-year-old burial. 2024 presented almost ideal conditions.

A Little History

Local news coverage, and oral history, indicated that Pvt. Robison was killed in action in France in 1944, his remains buried in France and later returned home to be buried "in the front yard" of the family home. No evidence has been found to support this. It appears that after his death, he was sent home and buried on the family farm. In 1948 the Veterans Administration supplied a veterans headstone for his grave that was shipped directly to his mother. His sister, Georgia, passed in 1952 and, according to oral history, was buried near him.

Additionally, local lore indicates that their graves and the headstone were moved to their current location along Maderos Ave. before the family home was torn down. GPR, test bores, and K9 searches have turned up no indication they were buried near the headstone.

Back to the Search

A survey of the farmed field, originally thought to be the location of the burial, yielded no interest from either of the dogs. Newly discovered information that day indicated that the actual location may have been just west of our original search area. Our talented researcher/dog handler, Joseph Kral, did some further digging and discovered that the actual location may have been near where three residences are currently located.

The following day we searched the field near the homes with no positive results. Permission was granted to survey the yard of one of the homes. There was one indication in the NW corner of that property, and both dogs wanted to enter the adjacent properties. Nothing definitive was found at this time.

The Search Continues

The mystery remains unsolved. ICF's recommendation to UTRGV was to attempt to gain permission to survey all three properties and outside the fence line, north of those properties, in the future. Hopefully we will be able to locate the burials so Pvt. Robison can be reburied at a Veteran's Cemetery, and his sister reburied in a local cemetery. And their story laid to rest.

~Joseph Kral and Lynne Engelbert~



This is the field where historical maps lead us and showed where, at the time, we believed was the family farm house.



November 2022, a muddy mess, dogs find nothing



February 2024, Jazz indicates possible scent



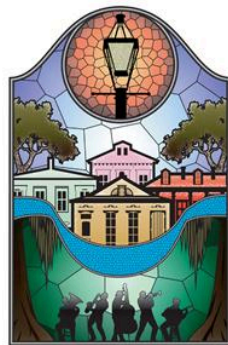
Local lore indicates that the graves, and the headstone, were moved to their current location before the family home was torn down. GPR, test bores, and K9 searches have turned up no indication they were buried near the headstone.



Thanks for all who came to visit us at SCA this year. As you can see we had 4, 4-footed friends with us.



SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY



Hope to see some familiar faces in New Orleans as well as meeting new people. Please come visit us in the exhibit hall, **Marriott Grand Ballroom booth 313**. We will be there with some of our 4 footed friends. Somehow I just know there will be a very large attendance at the meeting. Who does not want to go to New Orleans and eat fun food?



 Institute for Canine Forensics
P.O. Box 620699
Woodside, CA 94062-0699
(650) 503-4473 | info@ICFK9.org | www.ICFK9.org 

We are happy to talk with you about your project and how our dogs might help locate human remains or burials. Call, email, or check us out on facebook or our website. (You can find past newsletters there, too.)

Please feel free to pass this newsletter along to anyone who might be interested.

Copyright © 2023 Institute for Canine Forensics. All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

This email was sent to L2@mountainwood.org
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)
Institute for Canine Forensics · P.O. Box 620699 · Woodside, CA 94062 · USA

