

Inspired Tails – By Marilyn Kimbrell

We first met Sadie at The Savannah Humane Society six months before our daughter Mandy and her husband, Dave, were deploying to Iraq. Given the circumstances some would think it was bad timing, but for us it could not have been more perfect. We made a collective decision to adopt Sadie so that while Mandy and Dave were deployed our “grand-dog” would have a home. We wanted Mandy and Dave to enjoy the love of a dog prior to deployment, and we did not want them to worry about her while they were gone.

Sadie immediately fit into her new home and became Mandy’s running buddy and shadow. She helped Mandy concentrate on life in the states instead of focusing on her upcoming fifteen month deployment. When Mandy and Dave deployed in late 2007, they were on separate timelines so Sadie was part of both farewells. Dave left first and Sadie provided Mandy with comfort while she was home alone for a month. When it was time for Mandy to deploy, Sadie was not nearly as willing to say goodbye and refused to be in a picture with Mandy in uniform. Sadie’s obvious understanding of the situation made it difficult on all of us, but we looked forward to taking care of our “grand-dog” and the connection we would share with Mandy and Dave as a result of her presence.

While Mandy and Dave were deployed, I became the photographer and journalist of Sadie’s activities at home. Sadie’s new home meant new friends which included our two dogs and one cat, all of which were over twelve. After a short adjustment period, Sadie fit right in and desperately tried to convince our other dogs to play. Sadie was young and active and her personality brought new adventures into our calm routines. We began to call her a “little bit of trouble” or “Little Bit” for short. We quickly adapted our routine to incorporate daily walks in an effort to give her an outlet for her energy. Our other dogs benefited from her youthfulness, and each morning we all went on long walks together to the creek. Sadie had to wear a bell so I could keep up with her in the woods. On these adventures I would take pictures and then compile them into a PowerPoint to send to Iraq for my daughter and son-in-law.

Soldiers who are deployed look forward to hearing about life in the states because it gives them something to think about other than the undesirable conditions they are experiencing. Sadie’s adventures gave Mandy and Dave something to look forward to on a regular basis. Sadie was a rescue dog that was found with a broken leg, but our time with her proved nothing about her spirit was ever broken. The decision to adopt Sadie was not only a blessing to Mandy and Dave but also to us because of the connection we shared despite being thousands of miles away.

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