



# Finding Jack

*Gareth Crocker*

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## **Finding Jack** Gareth Crocker

When the war ends, how do you leave your best friend behind?

After losing his young family in a tragic accident, Fletcher Carson joins the flagging war effort in Vietnam. Deeply depressed, he plans to die in the war. But during one of his early missions, Fletcher rescues a critically wounded yellow Lab whom he nurses back to health and names Jack. As Fletcher and Jack patrol and survive the forests of Vietnam, Fletcher slowly regains the will to live.

At the end of the war, the U.S. Government announces that due to the cost of withdrawal, all U.S. dogs serving in the war have been declared “surplus military equipment” and will not be transported home. For the hundreds of dog handlers throughout Vietnam, whose dogs had saved countless lives, the news is greeted with shock and disbelief.

For Fletcher, he knows that if he abandons Jack, then he too will be lost. Ordered to leave Jack behind, he refuses — and so begins their journey.

Based on the actual existence and abandonment of canine units in Vietnam, *Gareth Crocker's Finding Jack* is a novel of friendship and love under desperate circumstances that will grab your heart and won't let go.

## **Finding Jack Details**

Date : Published (first published February 15th 2011)

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Author : Gareth Crocker

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# From Reader Review Finding Jack for online ebook

## Vanessa says

Love the fact that this is a true story. In a way hate that fact too. It's horrible how someone shoots a military dog and then one man (helped by many) tries to save it. Its a beautiful story about love for this dog by many helps the men cope with the war in Vietnam.

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## Julie Markham says

After skimming this passage on the dust jacket - "Fletcher and Jack are a team, and like the hundreds of other U.S. military dogs and their handlers in Vietnam, they serve their country, saving countless lives. To the men, these dogs are heroes. But at the end of the war, the U.S. government announces that all dogs serving in the war have been declared "surplus military equipment" and will not be transported home. Ordered to leave Jack behind, Fletcher refuses - and so begins the journey of two friends who will go to the ends of the earth to save each other" - I had to read this story.

I hate to be critical of a book that deals with such touching subject matter, but the majority of it was full of combat situations. I wanted to know more about the dogs and a more deeply developed focus of Fletcher and Jack's relationship, I just felt a little short-changed in that area with all the action.

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## Debbie says

Finding Jack  
Gareth Crocker  
St. Martin's Press  
290 pages

A tragic accident takes away the very heart of Fletcher Carson, his wife and daughter. After their deaths he tries but finds he just can't cope with living without them, after a failed attempt at ending it all he decides to try suicide by war. It's late 1972 and the war in Vietnam is almost over, we're losing more and more boys everyday and many question the cost of their sacrifice, here at home we protest daily and treat our home bound soldiers not with fanfare but with barbs and shouts, but in the field orders must still be followed and that's where we find Fletcher. While on patrol his platoon finds an injured Labrador retriever, the Lieutenant orders him shot, but Fletcher won't have it. The dog is ultimately taken back to base where he becomes much more than a pet, but an invaluable asset protecting the men out on patrol. Then the news comes the war is over, there is cheering and celebration until the final edict is announced, one that will change forever the lives of a few good men and one brave dog.

Gareth Crocker made me relive my youth and not all pleasant memories. I remember being in high school in the early 70's hearing horror stories of big brother's, uncles' and sometimes father's of my classmates coming home from war, but not completely as they were never the same again, and then there were the stories of the ones that never came back. But the one thing I didn't know about was the fate of the thousands of war dogs in which only a fraction came home, most were euthanized and some were left to their own devices when the US pulled out of Vietnam.

This is the fictional tale of one of the lucky ones, a tale that will make you laugh and make you cry, but it's a

tale that had to be told, it's an important lesson to learn and Mr. Crocker does a wonderful job of telling it. He tells it, not in prose and flowery dialogue, but in a narrative that takes you into the jungles, on the bases and into the minds of the men who were there. He gives us colorful characters that he builds up and then takes away from us, not because he's cruel but because that's the way it was and he gives us characters that survive, that sacrificed and made it through and those are the characters that will stay with you long after the novel ends. This is a love story about a boy and a dog, it's a second coming of age story of someone who lost his way and found it again at the end of a leash. It's about camaraderie and deep friendship, about doing the right thing, it's about fate and it's ultimately about faith in the face of terror and destruction. Is this an easy book to read, no. You will cry a few tears. Is it worth those tears, definitely. All in all this is a feel good book, even though you have to wade through some pain. It's a novel for all ages, for all walks of life, it's a testament to those who give voice to those who have none to those who do the right thing.

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### **Karen says**

I ADORED this book! It's one of those books that I could not put down. You know the sort of book where you say to yourself 'just one more chapter, just one more page' and before you know it it's late at night and you've got to get up for work in the morning. Of course once it ended and i'd stopped sobbing, I couldn't get to sleep, reliving the entire story.

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### **Debbie says**

This could have been a great book - interesting plot about the Vietnam dog, and the main character had a gripping background. But from there, it read like a made for TV movie. Full of events predictable events, people that were just in the right place at the nick of time, and scenes that were 'supposed' to move the reader that were just too contrived. It's entertaining as a good quick beach read, but not if you're in the mood for a challenge.

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### **Jennie says**

I cried several times during this book, which means it has to be amazing. I picked it up because of the dog, saw that it also involved the Army, which is another subject I have been reading about, and I am so glad I read it. It was a great story, and I really recommend it.

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### **Kathy says**

I would give this WONDERFUL BOOK 10 STARS. It broke my heart and mended my heart and it will always be one of my most favorite books of all time.

Fletcher Carson volunteers for Viet Nam service. {You will find out why once you read the book.} Once in Viet Nam, Fletcher finds a dog, a yellow lab, which he names JACK. Man and dog become "one," with JACK finding trip wires and saving the lives of THE FAT LADY PLATOON.

I won't spoil the heart breaking story for you; but rest assured this story is a WINNER!

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### **Paul Pessolano says**

When the Vietnam War was winding down and the United States was evacuating material and personnel, they committed a crime that would make Michael Vick look like a saint.

At that time there were thousands of war dogs (soldiers) that were classified as "surplus military equipment" and not worth the cost of transporting them back to the United States. These were dogs that it was believed to have been responsible for saving somewhere in the area of ten thousand soldiers. A token number were handed over to the South Vietnamese, but the majority were just left loose to fend for themselves.

Fletcher Carson has lost his wife and young daughter in a plane crash and has become suicidal. This leads him to enlist in the Army and a request for duty in Vietnam. He becomes part of a reconnaissance unit. The unit is returning from a mission and they find a yellow Labrador retriever that has been shot. Ignoring orders to kill the Lab, Fletcher brings him back to camp and nurses him back to health.

They are unable to find where the dog came from because all war dogs were tattooed and this dog has no markings. The dog becomes a favorite with the members of the unit, and shows a knowledge of taking commands that a trained war dog would respond to.

The dog is sent out on missions and is able to detect bombs and booby traps, and on one mission save the entire squad from certain death.

When the United States starts to pull out of Vietnam, Fletcher is told that "Jack" must be left behind.

Fletcher devises a plan to stay behind and he and Jack plan to hike out of Vietnam through Laos to friendly Thailand. Once reaching Thailand, Fletcher is hoping to find a way for them to return to the United States.

A harrowing journey begins that displays the courage, friendship, and total dedication they have for each other.

A magnificent read that should be read by everyone, but definitely be every animal lover.

You will probably be smart to keep a box of Kleenex handy when reading the story.

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### **Lizzy says**

[let's go do one last mission to save this guy who helped me escape! let's save this potentially dangerous dog! (hide

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### **Asha Seth says**

I couldn't put it down.

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### **Darren says**

I got this book from the store book exchange at the store that I have coffee at. It was a good book. It was well written. It had a tear jerker ending for sure. It is about a dog that was shot in the Vietnam war by a American soldier. I hope to read more books by this author.

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### **Naomi says**

Crocker's book is a reason why I love debut authors and tend to seek them out. This book sucked me in almost immediately. It is a beautiful story about man's relationship with dog in a harrowing setting. I am actually shocked that it was written during the time of the Vietnam War versus the Iraq/Afghan War, since the issue of military leadership ordering the destruction of dogs and soldiers not listening and shipping them back to the US (thank God) is an issue which continues today. I loved this book as much as I loved *From Baghdad, With Love: A Marine, the War, and a Dog Named Lava* and *From Baghdad to America* (Library Edition): *Life Lessons from a Dog Named Lava*. There have been multiple times I have been on the verge of tears.

Beautiful debut, Mr. Crocker..if your debut is this good, I can't wait to see what we readers can be expecting in the future from you!

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### **Allyson says**

I loved this book! The lengths a man will go to in order to save this dog in the middle of the Vietnam War is

nothing short of amazing! Funny parts, sad parts, I loved this story and hated for it to end!

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### **Eva Leger says**

I can't review this the way I want. *Finding Jack* is one of the best books I've *ever* read. I haven't been able to stop thinking about the "war dogs" since I read the non-fiction book *Always Faithful: A Memoir of the Marine Dogs of WWII* by William W. Putney. (That was another one of the best books I've ever read.) *Finding Jack* reads like non-fiction. I can't count the number of times my heart started thumping, me wondering what was going to happen next. I haven't cried while reading many books. I haven't even cried while watching many movies (excepting *Hachi* of course.) I choked up numerous times during the course of this book. One time I was fully sobbing.

Sounds like something you don't want to read right? Exactly the opposite. I was dumbfounded by how I didn't want to put it down. I had to know what happened next. I hoped and hoped it would go the way I wanted it to go because I wasn't sure I could take something else.

I want to tell friends and strangers alike they have to read this. *This* relationship, the one between this man and his dog, are what each and every relationship between man and dog should be.

I kept finding myself comparing myself. Would I do that for my dog? *Could* I do that for my dog? The last isn't very fair considering I'm hardly military-ready and these were the types of things I was imagining. But you get my drift.

The only thing I wish was different about this book was the length. I wish it was about 4 times as long. I'd have loved it if it was. Crocker is a very, very talented man. I sincerely hope he's going to continue to write and I'd read his next book in a heartbeat. I'd *buy* it, full price, in a heartbeat (those that know me know what that means.)

Don't miss this - you'll never know what you're missing. Matter of fact, read both *Finding Jack* AND *Always Faithful*. They're both fantastic, fantastic works of art.

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### **Allison Reagan says**

Very tear jerking! One of the best books I've read in a very long while!!!

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