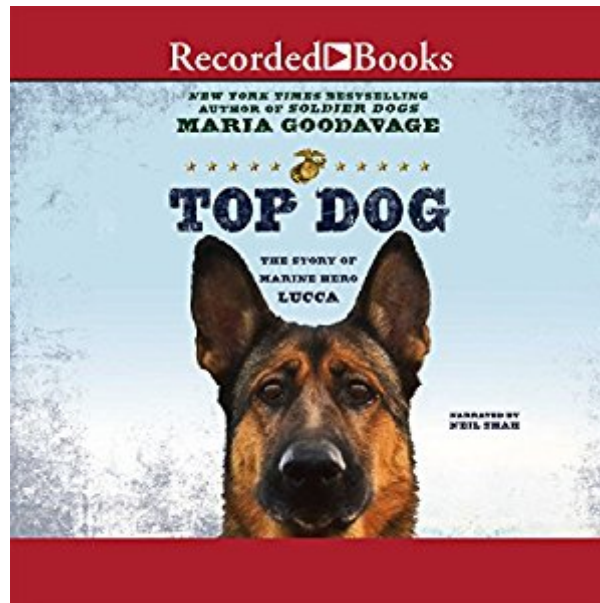




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# Top Dog: The Story Of Marine Hero Lucca



## Synopsis

The New York Times best-selling author of *Soldier Dogs* Top Dog, Maria Goodavage takes listeners into the life of Lucca K458, a decorated and highly skilled military working dog. An extraordinary bond developed between Lucca and Marine Corps handler Chris Willingham, launching what became a legendary 400-mission career. A Specialized Search Dog, Lucca belongs to an elite group trained to work off-leash at long distances from her handler. She served alongside both Special Forces and regular infantry. She and Willingham became so sought-after that units scheduled missions around their availability. The audiobook describes in gritty detail the team's adventures on and off the battlefields, including tense, lifesaving explosives finds and firefights as well as the bravery of fellow handlers and dogs they served with. Ultimately, we see how the bond between Lucca and Willingham overcame the endless brutalities of war and the traumas this violence ignites. Here is a portrait of modern warfare with a heart-warming and inspiring conclusion that will touch dog lovers and the toughest military listeners.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Maria does a wonderful job of immersing the reader into the action. Lucca is one heck of a dog, and with Willingham and Rod she saved hundreds of lives and accomplished amazing things. Throughout the story you will laugh, cry, and feel anger all due to the amazingly descriptive detail surrounding the training, actual work, and then warm embrace that the country gave to this wonderful dog for her commitment to protecting the US soldiers. I highly recommend reading this

account of an amazing dog!

TOP DOG is such a wonderful book. Lucca and her handlers story captures you and does not let you go. There is such a reality to this story and a true understanding of what the subjects of this book actually went through. You are on the journey with them at times and feel the emotion they feel. The author did an amazing job of capturing the detail necessary to make this book a must read. I feel as though this book left me with a clear understanding of the relationship between the Military working dog, Lucca and her handler, what seems to be an unbreakable bond. Top Dog is so much more than a book about a dog, you meet Lucca's other dog friends in the story along with their handlers, you truly get the whole picture of what these amazing animals do and how valuable they are to our Military.

I just finished reading "Top Dog," the story of MWD Marine Hero Lucca K458. Maria Goodavage captured the spirit and essence of Lucca, her Handlers, war, the bond between all three and Lucca's well deserved Happy-Ever-After Retirement. It's a must read for all who love, honor, and respect the immeasurable accomplishments of Military Working Dogs and their Handlers. Quite simply, I loved it. Thank you Maria for taking us on this incredible journey with Lucca.

I love anything K9 related, but I have an obsession with military dogs. And Guide dogs, and companion dogs, and service dogs....and well, dogs in general. But reading about their service is inspirational. I'm a dog trainer and I love to hear about their actual work, hoping to apply some of the behavior principles to everyday training. Lucca is just a super special dog, and hearing about her injury was hard to read. But there she goes again, helping someone she doesn't even know....because I also have a dog with 3 legs. He's a pug and gets along just fine.....and also he's in great company. Read this book if you're a dog lover, you won't be disappointed.

This book is an absolute must read. I read a lot of books, but this one is the best I've read in a very long time! Such an insight to MWDs and their handlers. Things you will never hear about nor read in the news. They are all heroes and I hope everyone reads this amazing book. I'd give it 10 stars if I could!

Author Maria Goodavage nails this beautifully written book about this dedicated war dog, Lucca K-458, a Marine hero and her devoted military handler Chris. The author takes you through the daily

lives of USMC Gunnery Sgt., Chris Willingham and his military dog, Lucca as they contribute to the war efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, working with Special Forces, battles with insurgents and fire fights. Lucca's speciality is sniffing out IED's. You will laugh and you will cry. It is clear that war is hell and how hard our military men, women and K-9's work to keep us safe. You quickly learn of the strong bond between Willingham and Lucca - a bond that remains today. With 400 missions behind her and a Purple Heart to prove it, Lucca, you are the TOP DOG! This book is a must read!

For those of us with an abiding interest in dogs and their unique abilities serving our soldiers during times of conflict, I insist that you go out of your way to read Maria's remarkably poignant account of one heroic service dog's journey through the hell that was war in Iraq and Afghanistan. While Lucca proved to be a specialized service dog of unequalled courage and ability, the book hinges almost entirely on the heartfelt, and heartrending, relationship that she forged with the two Marines who served alongside her as her handlers. Yes, there is the reality of terrible loss, both of soldiers and service dogs. But, the ultimate triumph of Lucca will move even the hardest of hearts. I cried, both tears of pain and loss, and tears of gratitude. Never was I more engrossed in a true story about a remarkable dog and the equally remarkable men who bonded with her to an extent few of us can imagine.

"Mamma Lucca" and her two 'Dads' have been featured in a recent Parade magazine. They are now sharing time with her in their homes and she is enjoying retirement. So when I spotted the book, I of course had to read it. As a dog lover, this was an emotional story; as someone who respects and admires our armed forces, it was an emotional story. Very well written by Ms. Goodavage, many times from the perspective of Lucca in a respectful manner, not in child's speak. Grateful that DoD and all those involved now honor military dogs as soldiers with all the benefits of care and support that they deserve in serving in our war zones and protecting our soldiers from harm. This book was a testimony to those changes.

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