

LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

After 3 month journey, pooch returned to White Sands home (6:03 a.m.)

by Alex Hinojosa \ El Paso Times

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After being lost for three months on a journey that took her across the nation, Dakota, a Siberian husky, is back in her New Mexico home.

On Friday, the female husky was reunited with her owner Audra Roberts. The reunion comes just two weeks before her husband, Rick, returns from deployment in Afghanistan.

"This is Christmas before Christmas," Roberts said. "I'm just glad I had her micro-chipped. Without it she wouldn't be here right now. It's the best thing I did for her."

In December the energetic husky went missing from her home at White Sands, N.M.

Roberts called the police, searched the neighborhood, put up fliers, searched the desert and sent messages on Facebook -- without any luck.

It wasn't until late March that the 1-year-old husky was found outside of Fort Bragg, N.C., 1,800 miles away from her backyard. Animal Services in that area scanned her and found that she was microchipped, said Amy Eury of HomeAgain Pet Recovery Service, based in Summit, N.J.

"I started crying when I heard she was found," Roberts said. "My friend Ashley (Aliberti) actually got the call (from Animal Services) and let me know the good news. I was at the sink washing bottles, and I started shaking. I just couldn't believe she had been found."

Roberts was unable to drive or fly to North Carolina, so the HomeAgain Pet Recovery Service paid for Dakota's flight to the El Paso International Airport.

As the minutes ticked by Friday night, Roberts clasped her hands together and patiently waited for her dog's return outside the airport's Delta Airlines cargo area. An hour after Dakota's flight landed, airport officials brought a tan dog kennel to the cargo area with a tired-looking black and white husky inside.

"Dakota," Roberts called.

Immediately the Husky's sleepy brown and blue eyes turned toward Roberts. The recognition was instant, and Dakota began to whimper and paw at the cage. As soon as the kennel door opened, Dakota leaped on her owner and licked her cheek.

"She remembers me," Roberts said crying. "She's going to sleep with me tonight. I'm going to spoil her rotten. After everything she's been through, I think she deserves it."

How did Dakota make it to all the way to North Carolina? Dakota isn't saying.

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