

We were both too young to make the century club, but together we totaled 87 years. I owned Balmullo's Beacon (a.k.a. Bubba) for 27 of his 28 years. Born in 1992, he was bred by Donna Duckworth out of Tullymor's April Fool, when she had leased April from May Medley and Aladdin from Catherine Mack. I bought Bubba from her sight unseen as a yearling, based on his parents, who I had seen during a tour of Connemara farms in the mid-Atlantic and Southeastern US in the late 80's. At the time, our farm was in East Bend, NC, and we were leasing Concord River Roaringwater Bay for breeding, which is how I became acquainted with Donna, a lasting friendship which has continued until this day.

Balmullo's Beacon made the trip from Florida to North Carolina as a yearling. He lived in a large paddock, somewhat hidden from view, for the next year and a half. He was weedy with a not-so-pretty head but had the hip and shoulder angles that mark a great athlete and the presence and conformation of a great sire. Bubba was the classic ugly duckling, turned swan! At age three he bloomed into a magnificent young stallion, was inspected and approved by the ACPS, and began his breeding career.

I had him started very lightly under saddle that same year, but his serious training was turned over to Jill Mooney the following year. She trained and competed with him in 1998-1999. During those 2 years he moved from Beginner Novice to Training level eventing, coming home periodically to service mares. In 1999, he was USCTA Area III Training Horse of the Year (4th in the nation among all breeds), earned the ACPS "Award of Excellence" in combined training, and was Grand Champion In-Hand at the ACPS Region IV Show.

After finishing the 1999 competition season, Bubba came home again, this time to be my Novice packer (my limitation, certainly not his). I was really excited to get back in the starting box after five or six years, having recovered from some serious health problems, and would only consider doing it on Bubba. He did not disappoint and carried me to the front of the victory lap more times than I expected. We were even on the winning team at the Eastern Regional "Chronicle of the Horse" Event in Tryon, NC, in 2000, which was quite a thrill for me.

During 2001-2007, he competed under me occasionally, as well as dutifully carrying any interested rider around the farm.



In 2008, after 4 very hectic breeding seasons standing both Balmullo's Beacon and *Gun Smoke, Charlie and I decided that we needed a break from breeding. We sold *Gun Smoke to the Igoe's in Ireland and we gelded Beacon, after collecting frozen semen from both, of course!

Then 9 year old junior rider, Avery Lewis, took over the reins in 2010. They were together through 2013. Their accomplishments during this time were too numerous to include here, but some of the highlights were : he carried Avery to her USEA Eventing Gold Medals and "Blue Ribbon" awards in both BN and Novice, they earned numerous Good Horseman Dressage Foundation Championships and Year-end Awards, and he earned his ACPS "Award of Excellence" in dressage.

Bubba came home after this and he began his transition to semi-retirement as a 22 year old seasoned campaigner. He provided wonderful competition and cross-country experience to a new junior rider, Brionna Harper, and then went on to teach a few more new young riders at my barn, including my granddaughters. He also did a short stint as a lesson pony at a local barn. When he started showing some signs of decline, he came home permanently. After some rehabilitation, he became the perfect partner for my student Krista, who works hard at conquering several physical challenges caused by cancer related diseases and treatments. Bubba was such a sport. We believe that he was holding on for one final competition for Krista, even when he could feel that his days were numbered. That show was the first one we had planned for 2020, and would have been the first w-t-c dressage test for Krista, but was the first show to be cancelled because of the coronavirus. After that cancellation, he was completely let off all work and his ailments took over.

My once in a lifetime partner was laid to rest and is buried in his paddock here at Foothills Farms, in Athens, TN, on May 15, 2020. I thank God for the privilege of being Bubba's person.

Balmullo's Beacon, 14.3h grey, S545 XXXI, 1992 – 2020
“An Tostal” ACPS Hall of Fame
SIRE: Aladdin (Erin Laddie x Fox Ridge Irish Lady)
DAM: Tullymor's April Fool (Montully's Son x Ailte Mhuire)