



Dog Handler Awarded Bronze Star

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Pictured at right in Afghanistan:

Thomas J. Jackson and his partner, Toby L024, a Specialized Search Dog.

Toby works off leash giving him a range of up to 300 meters away from his handler, although Toby and Tom generally work much closer together.



Remember that you can support MWD TSA in several ways. Purchases made through iGive.com, matching gifts in conjunction with your employer, bequests and, even, old fashioned cash.

See our Gift Acceptance Policy on our website for any questions about your gifts or contact Susan at 2ndvp@mwdtsa.org or at 703-580-9430 for any questions or needed assistance.

By Dixie Whitman

Six year old Toby L024 was a shiny, sleek black Labrador Retriever with a silly grin and slightly graying muzzle when he was partnered with Army Specialist Thomas J. Jackson during their 11-month deployment to the worst areas of Afghanistan. They developed the same characteristics: weary, dust-covered, yet always willing to work. Whether walking point on a combat patrol, clearing roadways of explosive devices or hunting for Taliban leaders,

this dog team was relentless.

As a Specialized Search Dog (SSD), Toby's job was to use his nose off lead and work ahead of his handler. Toby went on hundreds of patrols and found many IEDs, several caches of Rocket Propelled Grenades with propellant tubes, and even an old 250 lb. Russian GBU (Guided Bomb Unit) that was dropped during the Russian occupation, but failed to detonate on impact. That one bomb in the

hands of the Taliban would have had the potential to reduce homes and buildings into rubble and kill dozens of people.

During one intense firefight with the enemy, a Marine was gravely wounded and bleeding profusely. The only way to get him to medical care was through a path cleared by Toby. Thankfully, the Marine received the needed care and survived. On another mission clearing a dark-

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Celebrating With Governor Nathan Deal



Nathan Deal, Governor of Georgia, proclaimed March 15, 2011 as Military Dog Handler Day in Georgia. In a signing ceremony, he posed for a photo with representatives from four Georgia military installations and their K9 partners.

This is the 10th year that members of MWD TSA have coordinated a proclamation event in Georgia for the military dog handler community based at Georgia installations. Representatives from Army, Navy and Marine installations attended the signing ceremony and luncheon following the event. Also invited were veterans and supporters.

In addition to the personnel attending, working dogs Barros (Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany), Ffagan (King's Bay Naval Sub Base), and Rocky (Fort Benning Army Post) were in attendance. And, such great dogs they were- happy, friendly and great ambassadors to help educate the public about the important work these dog teams accomplish. The Governor's staff adored them.

After the meeting with Gov. Deal, all attendees reconvened at a nearby restaurant which serves delectable Mexican fare and enjoyed a leisurely luncheon in honor of the day designated to thank the dog handlers for a job well done.

It is a great opportunity for MWD TSA to really reach out and make important connections with old and new handlers and to hear some of their first hand experiences, like the handler who sat beside me and talked about working in Djibouti in 130 degree weather. These dogs really do need cooling materials to help keep their core temperatures down.

Georgia has a long and important history concerning Military Working Dogs. During the Vietnam War, Fort Benning served as the training ground for Scout Dog Handlers and Fort Gordon took over the role of training Combat Trackers to serve in Southeast Asia.

Veteran dog handlers from Vietnam are still dealing with the disposition of their dogs at the end of the war, as well as, the manner in which they, and their fellow troops, were treated upon their return to American soil. This is one of the reasons that MWD TSA's mission support and thank our teams NOW, when they need it most.

As one of the veteran's said, his purpose in co-founding our organization is to make sure those errors are never repeated and that our military knows they are appreciated and are not forgotten. The event with Governor Deal was one step in that journey. Our sincere thanks to all in attendance.

Military Dog Handler Day



Above: Navy handlers Smith and Sigler, are enjoying some time with handlers from other Georgia based installations. Below: Marine dog Barros, poses in the halls of the Capitol just minutes before heading into the Governor's Office to attend a proclamation signing.



Army MWD Rocky, above, enjoys a moment outside of the Capitol before heading inside to meet Governor Deal. Below, Handlers meet at a great in town eatery "Tin Lizzie's" to talk dogs and for a lunch celebrating the Military Dog Handler Day proclaimed by Governor Nathan Deal.



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U.S. Army Sergeant, Thomas J. Jackson and Toby, his best friend, partner and Specialized Search Dog, worked, played and lived together for nearly a year on their last deployment.

Here they appear to be holding a serious conversation regarding the mission at hand.

ened house, Toby went first, immediately sat at the door and would not allow anyone to enter. His educated nose had found several mortar rounds booby-trapped to explode when someone flipped on the light switch.

Due to the intense requirements of this duty, SSD Teams remain together until one of them retires. When a handler changes bases, the dog goes with him, unlike other narcotics, explosives or patrol dogs used in the military.

In talking with Tom, we asked him to share some of their Afghanistan experiences.

"Toby located three 105mm artillery shells buried in the

intersection of a road we were walking down. The amount of damage that IED could have done to a vehicle convoy could have easily disabled up-armored vehicles and had the potential to cause casualties inside the vehicle due to the amount of shrapnel and military grade explosives used.

He also found several small caches of weapons and munitions including machine guns, grenades, artillery and mortar rounds as well as home made explosives.

Toby found countless several IEDs made up of various kinds of HME (home made explosive) buried in the roadways or in fields preparing to be staged. We located several caches of

RPG (rocket propelled grenade) heads and the propellant tubes. Toby was an active participant on numerous raids to collect Taliban leaders and was actively engaged by small arms and RPG fire along with myself."

Tom continued, "Toby learned to ride on my ATV (all terrain vehicle) without armor around us to protect us from fire or explosions to better facilitate the needs of the teams we worked for. We were used on hundreds of patrols many times being out for well over 24 to 48 hours in the performance of our duties.

On one occasion we went for what was supposed to be a three day operation that turned into a week. With both people and dog food running low, we killed local animals and cooked them for food eating, while ever vigi-

lant. Toby used his senses to alert us to the presence of wild dogs that would sneak into our compounds at night while on these missions outside the lines of safety.

Toby has since provided security for the Secretary of the Army on two different occasions, has been utilized to clear the route that The President of the United States of America used to enter and exit the United Nations General Assembly in New York. He has worked a Secret Service checkpoint to secure foreign dignitaries safety at the same UN assembly. His work to clear The Presidents route occurred moments before his arrival. We were the last security measure ensuring his motorcade was unobstructed."

For his work, Toby received special playtime with a ball.

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NARRATIVE TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF**THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL****TO****SERGEANT THOMAS J. JACKSON**

Sergeant Thomas J. Jackson, United States Army, distinguished himself by exceptionally meritorious service as a Military Police (MP) Specialized Search Dog (SSD) Handler, in Regional Commands West and South, Afghanistan, in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, from 1 May 2009 to 1 April 2010. With Marine Special Operation (MARSOC), Sergeant Jackson conducted countless vehicle searches for Fire Base Shewan and was the point man on numerous patrols in the city of Shewan; his actions there directly led to the MARSOC's success in capturing two Joint Prioritized Effects List targets. During Operation Red Thunder, Sergeant Jackson with his SSD provided the Main Effort with the clear path through the heavy mined areas around the city of Shewan. Attached to Marine Special Operations Team (SOT) 8112 during the Initial Push to clear the city of Shewan. Sergeant Jackson and his SSD Toby were repeatedly used to clear compounds and buildings suspected of having weapons and explosives caches. When Marine SOT 8112 came under heavy enemy fire, he unhesitatingly maneuvered without regard for his personal safety, exposing himself and his SSD to effective enemy fire in order to return fire and facilitate continued compound searches. When the Marine SOT 8112 became pinned down, Sergeant Jackson maneuvered himself to a vantage point enabling him to return suppressive fires on the enemy's position. His actions allowed Marine SOT 8112 to maneuver toward enemy fire. Sergeant Jackson served as a MP SSD handler for Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) 1234. While operating in Adirah Village, an area with a very high IED and anti-personnel mine threat, Sergeant Jackson, with his SSD, volunteered to walk point, clearing the route for the ODA and the Village Stability Team (VST) resulting in the five IEDs being located and rendered safe. He taught his DDE to ride on an all terrain vehicle so they could be effectively employed on over 40 mounted movements. Outside the scope of an SSD handler, Sergeant Jackson instructed and participated in multiple cooperative training events with the Afghan National Police and the VST members including: immediate action drills, dismounted and mounted movement, and traffic control points. His actions are in keeping with the finest traditions of Military service and reflect distinct credit upon himself, the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan, Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan, and the United States Army.

Funding A Passion for Military Working Dogs

MWD TSA fans have a passion for Military Working Dogs. Support may be due to a love of dogs, a history of military service or simply a love of country. Whatever the reason, for supporters, there is an appreciation of those who stand at the gate, walk point, hunt high value targets and bomb making materials or protect American assets with their dogs.

Our organization has many missions whose focus remains on military working dogs, dog handlers, veteran handlers' events, advocating

for the adoption of retired dogs and public education.

With these goals in mind, we are asking for your financial support. If you have not made a recent donation, please know that your ongoing financial support is critical to our joint success.

One of the ways that you can enhance your financial gift is to investigate your company's matching gifts program. This may double or sometimes triple your donation and send more supplies and care to our dog teams.

Interestingly enough, recent statistics show that 88% of funding for charities come from individual donors— not corporations nor grants, but from people just like you and me. We need your help.

Of that 88% donated by individuals, approximately 8% comes from donor bequests. Putting MWD TSA in your will is fairly easy and painless. You can establish a dollar level or a percentage level to be donated to MWD TSA. In some cases, you can make your selections online. Again, easily done. Even a small

percentage will make a big impact in the success of meeting our goals.

Susan Colinan Carr is our Second Vice President and would be delighted to answer any questions that you might have with reference to matching gifts or donor bequests. You may reach Susan through her email:

2ndvp@mwdtsa.org or by phone at: 703-580-9430

You may also contact us at info@mwdtsa.org

We appreciate your support on behalf of our dog teams.

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For his work, Sergeant Thomas J. Jackson, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for exceptionally meritorious service. Toby was also nominated for this award, his service and value recognized by the Special Forces Captain, but our military does not recognize the heroism of dogs.

For this reason, we are nominating Toby to the AKC as an Award of Canine Excellence Hero dog with the following comments from his handler, Thomas J. Jackson:

"If I had to say anything about Toby's work, I would say this: I walked in front of everyone on countless

missions, was engaged by enemy fire, had to run through fire to safety and then return fire to allow others to make it to safety. I've crept through the night to enter and exit enemy houses while looking for Taliban and weapons caches. I've ridden helicopters into fields next to houses full of insurgents moments before storming them, then waited patiently for them to return to pick me up after the mission was over. I've done all of those things, but Toby did them by my side, and in most cases while walking in front of me. He saved my life and the lives of the men I worked with. I am an American Soldier, and he is my Hero."



Toby all cleaned up above. Keeping MWDs clean in the ever-present sand and wind is a challenge.

Grooming wipes and shampoos were always welcomed.

MWDTSA T-shirt Design Contest

Handlers supporting Handlers



MWDTSA T-Shirt Design Contest:

Contest begins May 1st– All entries must be received by September 1st.

All entries submitted may be used by Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

If entrant is under 18 years of age, they must have parental consent evidenced by a signature. Open to active duty K9 Staff, Dog Handlers and Veterinary Staff.

Shirts with the design may be used as both handler gifts and/or as support sales either online or at events.

Winning design may be used in some of the Care Packages going to our deployed Military Working Dog Teams. MWDTSA has exclusivity and sole right to use the design for fund raising purposes.

Design winners will be selected by a panel of 7 non-MWDTSA Board Members. (Will use some former handlers, artists and possibly an actor or two.)

Top Artwork Designer will receive 10 shirts printed with his/her design as top prize. Designer will be featured in our news.

Next nine top designers, as judged by our panel of judges, will receive a free T-shirt with the winning design. All designs may be used by MWDTSA at a later point in time. (Designers may submit more than one design.)

Design will require the following:

Shirt color will be either tan, military green, gray or black in color. (Artist decides when creating the design.)

Shirt should be silk screen printable.

No more than three silk screens are to be used. (Dark Colors will require one of the screens. So can include no more than two other colors.)

Designer Name: _____

Email address : _____

K9 Unit to which you are assigned: _____

Color of shirt to be used: _____

Name of design: _____

Please attach this information to your design and submit to Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc. Email: mwdtsa.dixie@yahoo.com or

Mail to: MWDTSA P. O. Box 5864, Canton, GA 30114

Signature required for valid entry to be in the contest. Either physical signature or an email note "I attest" to the following: "I understand that the design being submitted is for the use of MWDTSA and becomes joint property with MWDTSA."

Signed _____

Military Working Dog Team
Support Association, Inc.

Sit. Stay. Support.

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Britta, a military working dog, bites U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Roberto Matos during a controlled water aggression exercise at Hurlburt Field, Fla., . The goal of water aggression training is to allow the dogs to become more comfortable working in a variety of environments. Matos and Britta are assigned to the 1st Special Operations Security Forces Squadron. (DoD photo by Senior Airman Sheila deVera, U.S. Air Force/Released)



Photo Page

U.S. Army Sgt. Todd Neveu, a military working dog (MWD) handler, and his dog, Gino, search baggage for drugs before the bags are loaded onto a plane July 25, 2010, at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq. MWD teams randomly inspect baggage and personnel as U.S. forces transit through the base. (U.S. Air Force photo by Perry Aston/Released)

Thanks to Mt. Bethel Elementary School for your warm welcome!

You rock!!