

February 2016
Award Winning
Monthly Newsletter

Volume 8, Issue 2

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Kenel Talk is an award
winning MWD publication!

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MWDTSA touches the lives of dogs and people near and far. This month, our articles and photos take us from Georgia, Tennessee and West Virginia westward through South Dakota and on to the deserts in California. We then travel OCONUS to Hawaii and Kosovo while going back in time to Vietnam.

Subscribe to see where we connect next month!

Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

MWDTSA KENNEL TALK



Corporal Jared Royce, a military working dog handler with 1st Law Enforcement Battalion, I Marine Expeditionary Force, returns from a patrol with his dog, Hugo, aboard Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., Dec. 12, 2015. Steel Knight prepares Marines and sailors with the 1st Marine Division and adjacent I Marine Expeditionary Force units with the skill sets necessary to operate as a fully capable Marine Air Ground Task Force. USMC photo by Cpl. Will Perkins.

Paws On The Ground: Steel Knight 2016

Story and photos by Cpl. Will Perkins

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. - The desert sand of Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, California, is familiar ground for the Marines participating in Exercise Steel Knight, but there's a different kind of 'devil dog' running through the vast Mojave.

The 1st Law Enforcement Battalion detachment with I Marine Expeditionary Force took their place alongside their military working dogs in Steel Knight to further develop skills required to integrate with their ground combat counterparts. Steel Knight is a division-led, scenario-based exercise to strengthen the warfighting abilities of the full-scalable, ground combat element from Dec. 3-13, 2015.

handler with 1st Law Enforcement Bn., I MEF, worked alongside his assigned dog, Hugo, to serve as a valued asset of the warfighting team. Hugo is trained in both explosive detection and aggression and is one of many dogs that served alongside the Marines of the 1st Marine Division.

The dog's sense of smell allows him to pick up traces of munitions the enemy may be hiding in a house or vehicle, 1st Lt. Devin McAtee, the military police officer in-charge with the battalion, said. The dogs can also search for improvised explosive devices during patrols and provide an extra element of safety for Marines moving through an area during operations.

Corporal Jared Royce, a military working dog

Steel Night 2016 continued on page 2

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Steel Night 2016 continued from page 1



Left: Lance Cpl. David Wadleigh, a military working dog handler and Nicky, a military working dog provide security during a simulated mass casualty drill during Steel Knight.



Right: Hugo, a military working dog assigned to 1st Law Enforcement Battalion, I Marine Expeditionary Force, takes his part as a patrol, explosive detection dog for Steel Knight.

Despite being well-versed in their craft, Hugo and Royce were operating in the open desert much different than the vegetated, hilly terrain of Camp Pendleton. This provided an additional element of complexity and realism to the training.

"Coming out here to the desert, it's a little bit different than Pendleton ... I've been with Hugo for about a month," Royce explained. "While we're out here, I'd like to work with his off-leash capabilities like his previous handler had."

Operating without a leash is a significant step in trust between the handler and dog. This allows the Marine to send the dog a short distance away to search or track an objective, like a person or hidden cache.

"While we're out here if anybody gets too close or get near the perimeter, he'll let me know," the Illiopolis, Ill. native added. "If that person wants to get hostile, I can send the dog."

Taking on all the tasks of a handler and a

dog can be taxing for the team as the days wear on.

"We don't have any kennels for the dogs so we have to be with the dogs 24/7," Royce stated. "We have to find a happy medium for the working hours...so the dog isn't constantly working."

Steel Knight exposed the handlers to other assets they may not normally operate with.

"This exercise we get to come out here and work with the infantry and their vehicles, who we normally don't get to see," Royce said.

However, this type of exposure benefits all parties due to the increased level of familiarity. The need for military working dogs and the asset they bring to the table is in high demand.

"I'm looking for the Marines to have a better understanding of the capabilities and working relationship," McAtee, the Pooles-

ville, Maryland native added. "Many times we go out and we don't have the working dogs attached to us, dogs are a pretty hot commodity right now."

Working with units to assist in operations for the duration of Steel Knight sets the military working dog handlers up for continued success.

"Getting the dogs out there and regularly working with them will help us in the future," McAtee said.

"They get to go out to the field quite a bit but the infantry Marines aren't used to working with the dogs so this gives them a chance for them to become familiar with them and the capacity we employ them in."

With a greater understanding and means to execute the mission, Marines and their four-legged counterparts truly gain a leg-up for what is yet to come.

The Wish List Boxes Are Arriving!!!



Our dog teams have hit the jackpot with your extraordinary support via our 1st Quarter Care Package Amazon Wish List.

Our dedicated volunteer, President Nikki Rohrig, made numerous trips to pick up the goods and open all of the boxes, in the middle of the already hectic holiday season.

Nikki opened boxes, photographed the contents and emailed the photos cross country to our Secretary, Jan Slotar, who then sent out the thank you notes. That's a coordinated team effort!

These items will be included in the great care packages being sent out the last Friday in January from Washington, D.C. - Celebrating Super Bowl 50!

The Amazon Wish List doesn't always include all of the info we need in order to send out thank you notes. We want to thank all of our Amazon Wishlist donors in case we weren't able to send you a personal note.



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Bitework at Camp Bondsteel

CAMP BONDSTEEL, Kosovo – Wide eyes peered over the kennel fence and a tail wagged back and forth in excitement as Hundi geared up for his daily bite training.

The two military working dog handlers each arrived with their assigned canine and began training their dogs daily in bite training at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo.

Bite training is a simulated controlled attack with the canines and their handlers. One of the handlers acts as the decoy and places a wrap on their arm. They then simulate a situation in which the handler or the canine would be in harms way.

"The bite training is done daily so that they stay proficient," said Sgt. Earl Thomas, a military working dog handler with 525th Military Police Detachment out of Wiesbaden, Germany. "I take care of him and keep him trained and he keeps me safe."

His partner is Staff Sgt. Lex, a 4-year-old German shepherd, whose rambunctious personality fits with Thomas's style.

Even though they train daily, there is also time for treats and playing fetch.

Pfc. Cindy Ortiz, a military working dog handler with the 100th Military Working Dog Detachment stationed at Miesau, Germany, is on her first deployment with her partner Spc. Hundi, a 3-year-old German shepherd, who is of a larger stature compared to her small frame.

"Hundi is huge," said Ortiz as she laughed. "I got the biggest dog in the kennel the day we were assigned to each other."

Hundi ran through the five phases of the bite training without a hitch.

On Ortiz's command, Hundi ran towards Thomas and attacked the wrap on his arm. He began to swing his arm back and forth, and when Ortiz gave the "Hault" command, Hundi released his grip.

"He's a good partner," said Ortiz. "We go through these phases with them and we try to trick them or throw them off to see if they will do something different but they are just really smart, and they do what they are told."

Story and photos by Sgt. Melissa Parrish



Pfc. Cindy Ortiz, with the 100th Military Working Dog Detachment out of Miesau, Germany, plays the decoy as Staff Sgt. Lex, an explosive detection working dog, bites down on the wrap during bite training at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, last winter.

Bite training is just one of the drills the handlers perform weekly. Lex and Hundi are also certified in explosive detection.

"They are explosive detection dogs as well as patrol dogs and they are trained to detect several different types of explosives," said Ortiz.

Lex and Hundi train often to maintain a 95 percent accuracy rate on their proficiency.

"These dogs are well trained and ready for whatever mission comes our way," said Thomas. "These are our partners, they have our backs and we have theirs."

Thomas and Ortiz are currently assigned to Multinational Battle Group-East as part of Kosovo Force 19.

Photos continued on page 5

When Winter Blows Into Kosovo

Photos continued from page 4



Please enjoy these wonderful photos, on the left, showcasing Sgt. Thomas and Pfc. Ortiz with their two partners, Lex and Hundi: two of our favorite teams. These teams were supported during their yearlong deployment.

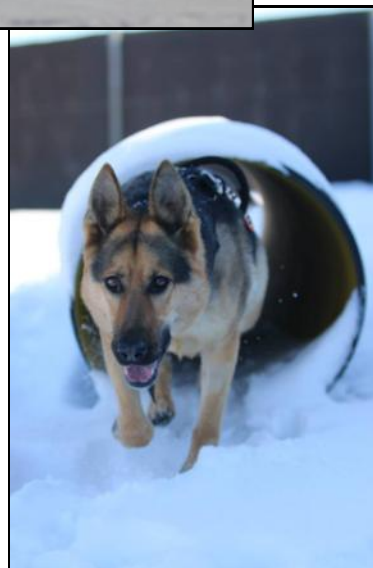
They worked together last year to train their two K9s and in Kosovo, when winter comes, snow training takes place.

Top left: Sgt. Earl Thomas, a military working dog handler, with 525th Military Police Detachment out of Wiesbaden, Germany, and Pfc. Cindy Ortiz, with the 100th Military Working Dog Detachment stationed out of Miesau, Germany, perform bite training with Staff Sgt. Lex, an explosive detection working dog, at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo.



Top right: Sgt. Earl Thomas poses with his stunning partner, Lex. In military tradition, because the dog handler is required to take care of the needs of his dog, the dog is given an honorary rank one higher than the handler. Since Thomas is a Sgt., Lex is considered a Staff Sgt.

Center: Handsome Hundi, plays with a bite sleeve that he took from the arm of the decoy. It's his reward for hard work and dedicated training.



Bottom left: Pfc. Cindy Ortiz and her photogenic partner, Hundi, pose in the snow during training time.

Bottom right: Staff Sgt. Lex makes his way through the tunnel on the obstacle training course.

Volunteering from Afar

By Linda Costa-Bryan

MWDTSA relies on the generosity of our donors, without whom we would be unable to make the care packages to the MWDs and their handlers happen. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the following companies and individuals who gave recent donations:

3 Busy Dogs, Burien, Wash.
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 Abby Fenton
 Foothill Christian School, Glendora, Calif.
 (Bridget Baumer)

Donor list continued on the bottom of pages 8 and 9

Volunteering from someplace other than the mainland of the United States, for a group based in the United States, can be quite a challenge. Some of the things that I have come up against never occurred to me when I put in my application to volunteer with MWDTSA. After all, Hawaii is a part of the U.S. What problems could there possibly be?

The first challenge I have run into is the time difference. I have gotten quite used to figuring this out, but most people never give it a thought. When someone says that they will call me at 10:00 I always have to ask, "Your time or mine?". 10:00 your time can make it 4:00 in the morning my time and I talk to no one at that hour. You can take your chances if you want. Because of the time difference I am usually the last one to know anything. By the time I get to my e-mail or Facebook, you have already all been brought up to date on whatever the situation is and are working on a solution. I haven't even had my first cup of coffee yet.

The second challenge is the actual physical distance and the cost of that distance. You all don't know how much I would like to participate in a quarterly packing event. But I cannot just hop in my car and drive over. I need to take a plane and we all know what that can cost these days. I think the next packing event should be here and then you could all come visit. (Side note: the entire staff of MWDTSA would like to take Linda up on that offer—packing in Hawaii!!!)

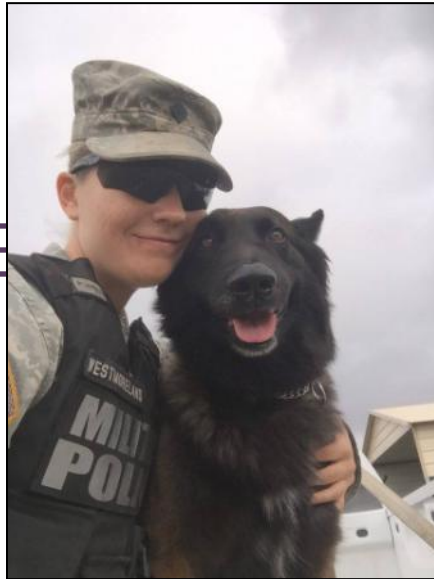
My third big challenge is doing a base visit by myself for the first time as I have never done one before; I have no one to shadow me and let me know what I have done right or wrong. It would be nice to do one with someone for the first time. I have found that because of the specific challenges that I have mentioned, some of the kennels here in Hawaii have never interacted with us before. Obviously they have never had a base visit and their teams are not always reported to us for care packages. I have decided that changing this will be my goal. I am starting from scratch, but so far so good. I have made contact with the Kennel Master at Joint Base Pearl Harbor/Hickam. He is very busy but I am very persistent. I am working on getting contacts at Schofield Barracks and Kaneohe Bay Marine Base.

I am excited and a little nervous about doing so many things on my own, so I will just make executive decisions as situations come along and hope for the best, but so far no one has said "You're fired!". As can be expected in Hawaii, things are a lot different than on the mainland. Traditions and customs are different so I need to be very careful of local values as well as military and USA values. Some days it is quite the tightrope to maneuver.

Needless to say, I LOVE WHAT I AM DOING! and I wouldn't change anything for a minute.

This Diesel Has A Spark

Photos courtesy of the handler.



Enjoy these photos of Diesel and his handler, SPC Sabrina Westmoreland. Diesel is on his second deployment being supported by MWD TSA.

His charming demeanor has him on everybody's "Wants to Adopt" list. We love his bewitching, smiling face and we think you will, too.

He also models headgear well!



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Solvit Dog Products: Thanks for the Water Bowls

Thanks to Solvit Dog Products for their very generous donation of 150 collapsible water bowls to Military Working Dog Team Support Association.

Solvit Dog Products posted these nice comments and pictures on their Facebook page. "We believe the Military Working Dog Teams deserve support in any way possible. After we donated 150 bowls, we received these awesome shots of MWDs Varato and Meki enjoying a much-deserved water break!"



Donor list continued on this page and page 9

Gay Givens
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 Newnan Kennel Club, Palmetto, Ga.
 New England Fleece Co., Fall River, Mass.
 Laurie Newton

A Big Thanks to the Betsy Ross Foundation



Above: From left to right, Thomas Harrison, VP of Allegro; Ruth Conroy; John Fuqua, President of Allegro; Julie Williams and Mary Lou Reed.

A message from the Betsy Ross Foundation:

Here is the Betsy Ross Foundation with the beautiful MWDTSA plaque.

Allegro foods is the backer of this Foundation named in honor of Ruth, Julie and Mary Lou's mother, Betsy. Through their kindness, a donation of \$5,000 was made to support MWDTSA. This is a generous and supportive gift for MWDTSA to use in any manner necessary with no strings attached.

We were delighted to spread the love from this foundation to our handlers through gifts of shirts and to dogs with gifts of toys. Thank you to the Betsy Ross Foundation of Paris, TN. Please stop by and support them at: [Allegro Marinade - The Marinade Everything Marinade](#)

Donor list continued on this page

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 Kathie Woodring

Donor list continued next month

Seymour High School Honors Military Working Dogs

In November of 2015, I was invited to do something that had a lasting impression on me. I have been volunteering for MWD TSA for about a year now and being able to do little things like this reminds me how lucky I am to be a part of such a special cause.

Seymour High School, in Tennessee, puts on an outstanding choral performance every year on Veterans' day. These high school students and their director, Jean Burkhart, work for many months to perfect these performances. Every year they choose one organization to showcase and this year they chose MWD TSA. What an honor!

As the performance started, I sat there in anticipation, not knowing what to expect. The high school students began singing many songs recognizing parts of the Armed Forces. The performance included many talented students. Before I knew it the time came for Military Working Dogs. Two students gave a short presentation on the importance of Military Working Dogs, not only to the military but to their beloved handlers.

It was then followed by a video of one our own volunteers and former handler Jonathan Jackson. This video described the relationship between a handler and his dog. Also, the importance of supporting these dogs. I looked around the room and every eye was engaged on the video. I saw eyes tearing up. My eyes were tearing up. You could see hearts opening up. It

was an amazing thing and something I will never forget. After the video, I was then welcomed on stage and handed a gift basket containing donations for the dogs and their handlers. The students and faculty who put this all together and were so generous with their donation and time were truly outstanding and a pleasure to work with. They made a difference that day and spread our message to many people.

That night I saw a great thing happen. I saw our message being spread and people young and old generously give and listen to a cause that is near and dear to many of our hearts. It was a privilege to be able to represent MWD TSA and an honor to watch these students put out such an amazing performance and help spread the word of Military Working Dogs.

Story and courtesy photo by Martina Elliott



Martina Elliott, in her blue MWD TSA volunteer T shirt, received a gift basket of goodies for military working dogs from the choral students at Seymour High School, Seymour, Tenn.

Fulton County Students Learn Directly from the Source



Interact, a student service club at a metro Atlanta elementary school, gathered on Wednesday, January 13th for a Skype visit with one of the Marines' premier trainers of military working dogs, SSgt. A. Nieto. It was a nifty opportunity to use technology so that the students were introduced to America's military working dogs by an expert thousands of miles away from them.

The photo at left shows the class sitting mesmerized during their Skyped conversation with SSgt. A. Nieto. Thinking back to the day when most of us were in school, it is hard to imagine how exciting this type of opportunity would have been.

Interact is a service club where the kids complete two service projects a year. They've chosen to support military dogs this year as they are big fans of animals. Thanks to all involved.

Ellsworth AFB to Establish Indoor MWD Facility

Story and photos by A1C James Miller

ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE, S.D. - Ellsworth became the first Air Force base in the continental United States to have an indoor training facility for its four-legged defenders when it became operational Oct. 24, 2015.

The new facility, located in Dock 32, provides an array of features and amenities for 28th Security Forces Squadron MWD handlers to train their partners and helps to greatly reduce the loss of training time due to austere weather conditions.

After seven months of planning and gaining major command level approval, a \$100,000 contract was awarded to a local business to complete the renovations that included removing aircraft parts and installing turf, barriers and obstacles to transform the aircraft hangar into a training facility for military working dogs.

Tech. Sgt. Abraham Wheeler, 28th SFS kennel master, said the new facility provides MWDs and their handlers the ability to train year-round, regardless of weather conditions.

"Being at Ellsworth, there is a good chance we can be covered in snow for five months out of the year," Wheeler said. "The indoor facility allows us to train every day of the year: rain, snow or shine."

He added that the new facility allows teams to train on a variety of topics ranging from basic obedience training to realis-

tic patrol scenarios.

"The facility minimizes training time lost due to inclement weather," said Wheeler, who has been a handler for eight years. "It also gives an isolated area for the dogs to work on issues they may have with minimum distractions."

While the new facility may be slightly smaller than the outdoor area, it still includes the obstacle course, patrol work field and detection training environments.

"My favorite part is how versatile it is," Wheeler said. "We can do so many things and not worry about hurting one of the

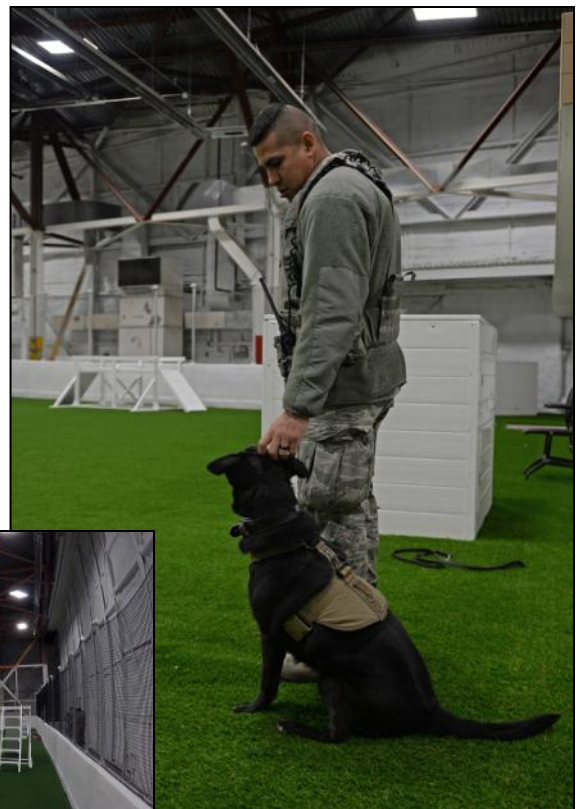
dogs due to cold weather."

Wheeler hopes other bases will follow suit, especially northern bases, where freezing temperatures and fierce winds hinder training.

Enclosed and heated, the facility also helps the dogs stay healthy and train in a safe environment, according to Wheeler.

"We are extremely grateful to be the first base to have an indoor military working dog training facility," Wheeler said. "[The ability to train inside] benefits the dogs, handlers, and most importantly, the Air Force."

Right: Staff Sgt. Michael Gwin, 28th Security Forces Squadron military working dog handler, pets Sjors, 28th SFS military working dog, during a training session at the new indoor military working dog training facility at Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., Dec. 30, 2015. The new building allows year-round training, regardless of weather conditions.



Right: The new indoor military working dog training facility is ready for use at Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., Dec. 30, 2015. The building, a renovated aircraft hangar, allows obstacle course and patrol and detection training to be conducted in a safe environment.



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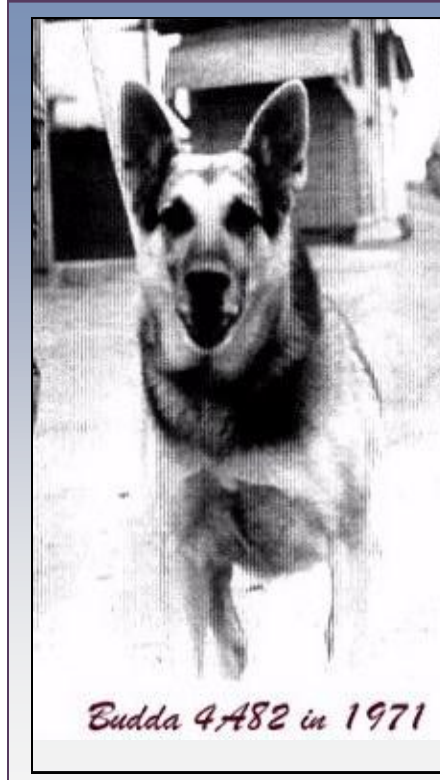
If I Could Only Talk: Part Two

Note: This month we continue Budda's story. In January's newsletter Budda introduced us to his story of joining the military and his first year of combat duty in 1966 with Bob Brown as his handler and friend in Vietnam.

My life became a whirlwind of missions. Brownie (as I now referred to Sgt Brown) and I had become inseparable buddies. We each trusted each other completely. That bond was our means of survival. We made it through Operations Sioux City in Xom Cat, Attleboro in Minh Than, Waco around Bien Hoa, Cedar Falls in the Iron Triangle, Big Springs in war zone D, and Junction City in war zone C near Tay Ninh. I felt honored in March of 1967 when Brownie and I were selected for a very special secret mission. Out of all the Scout Teams in country, we had been selected to go TDY with the 5th Special Forces Group and be attached to one of their A Teams. I liked to think we were chosen due to my skills and temperament, but I guess Brownie's security clearance level may have helped a little. I never told anyone where we went or what we did. Hey, I couldn't talk anyway!

After returning to our kennel at Bien Hoa I got the shock of my life. Brownie would be going home in July when his DEROS date was up. After all we had been through together the team was being broken up. My handler for the past 15 months was now under direct orders to stay away and have no further contact with me. They said it was to prepare me to accept Brownie's replacement. Since we had all come over as a unit at one time, all of the other dogs were in the same position. How could the military screw us dogs like that? Our tour of duty had changed into a life sentence. My old "attitude problem" returned. From here on I would do my job, but I didn't have to like it or be nice to anybody. It's probably good that I couldn't talk then. Article 15 for sure. But I knew that they had to feed and water me, and since we had no rank or pay that could be taken away, I really didn't give a damn.

My next handler was an OK kind of guy, as were all of those that followed. One, Rick Hovis, even gave up his platoon clerk job to become my handler! We all worked hard, but the personal chemistry just wasn't the same. Brownie would be a part of me forever.



Story and Photos by Pete Peters

Left: An image of Budda 4A82 in 1971 at the ending of his military career.

He had a reputation that preceded him: alert, attitude and aggression. He had five confirmed enemy kills in close combat.

The summer and fall of 1967 were especially rough. The 173rd was moving north into II Corps to intercept the NVA that were coming in from Laos and massing in the central highlands. I worked in Pleiku Province, sweeping the Ia Drang valley. From there we moved farther north into Kontum Province. It was here in the hills above Dak To that we were in the middle of some of the most vicious fighting of the war. Many of my friends and their handlers became casualties there. I still had my attitude problem, and the hand to hand fighting had shown me just what I was really capable of doing to whomever I felt was an enemy.

The entire Brigade was now set up at An Khe and a break in action was what we all needed. I was just getting used to kennel life when the Tet Offensive began. The remainder of 1968 and 69 was split between patrolling near highway 19, the main artery into the western sector of the highlands, and then going east to the coastal plains at Bong Son.

Next we were back in our crates again. The Brigade was moving again. This time to a place called LZ English, located just

north of Bong Son. We all hated those crates. It seemed that each time we were moved in them, our whole world sort of fell apart. Everything was always completely different when we got where we were going. Dogs prefer familiar places, faces, and routines. I was tired of all the changes, and my attitude got worse. Long days on point left me tired that night and stiff the next morning. I was grumpy and the platoon all knew it. It was determined that it was time for me to retire. It was unofficial of course, but I was not assigned to another handler, therefore I had no more missions. Life was easy around the Kennel area. I had regular meals and spent much of the day sleeping in the shade. The platoon Sergeant, SFC Kelly, took a liking to me and would take me out for walks and some exercise. I only bit him once. After all, I still had an image to maintain. I was a seasoned veteran and a survivor. I felt I deserved the praise I got. When handler Don Bradley went up for the 173rd Airborne Brigade's coveted "Sky Soldier of the month" award, he was asked

If I Could Talk: Part 2 continued on page 13

If I Could Talk: Part 2 continued from page 12

which of the dogs was most famous. Without hesitation he answered "with such a long list of accomplishments, plus many confirmed enemy kills, that could only be Budda". But by now I was a little overweight and turning slightly gray. It didn't worry me though. Most of the handlers would be in similar shape by the time they retire.

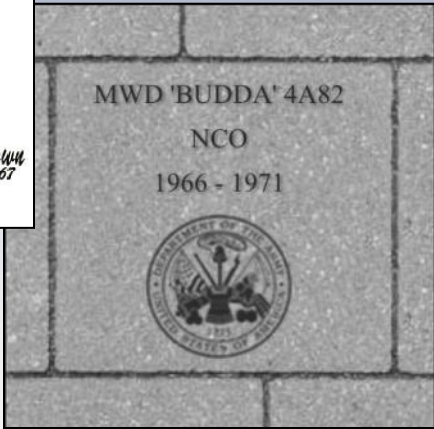
Then one day in July of 1971 I noticed a different mood around the kennels. Many of the other dogs were being put into their crates and loaded into a truck. I eagerly followed because I was tired of Camp English. Since most of the handlers had left we might even be going home. That would be great. We deserved a break after all we had done. It wasn't a very long trip. We were taken to a nearby Air Base and there were many dogs there from all over the country. There were Scouts, Trackers, and Sentry dogs all together here. I guess we really are being sent back home! Maybe they will ship me to Brownie. I wonder if he thinks about me as often as I have thought of him. Does he remember all we went through together? I am so excited that I can hardly stand still. In the Veterinary Clinic I can't understand why everyone is crying. Just give me my DEROS shots and get me on that plane and I'll finally be getting out of here. I can hardly wait! In all of my excitement I barely feel the needle. I was used to them anyway. It feels just like the tranquilizer shot that we got before we left on the plane ride over here back in July of '66. I feel a little sleepy all of a sudden. I think I'll lie down and rest right here. It seems to be getting darker. Will Brownie remember me? I feel numb! I think I'll rest right awhile and think of what it will be like to be home. I'm Tired.

I - ZZZ ZZZ ZZZ ZZZ ...

Note: Thankfully, Budda and Brownie's legacy did not end that day in Vietnam, when MWDs were still considered excess equipment and euthanized at the end of service. Robert Brown went on to retire from the Army. Residing in New Jersey with his civilian canines, he became an accomplished artist before passing away



Left: First handler and talented artist, Robert Brown, created this artwork in 2000 as a memorial from his time with Budda in 1966-1967.



Right: We have been advised that Budda 4A82 will have his own brick paver at the Las Vegas Veterans Memorial when it is dedicated, thanks to Mark Rossetti.

several years ago. His artistic rendering of his friend Budda is included with this article

Budda (4A82) bravely served his country for the "human equivalent" of over 40 years. During his time in Vietnam he had eight handlers, all of whom survived to return home. He was wounded five times. He had five confirmed enemy kills in close combat. He protected and saved the lives of uncountable numbers of American servicemen. For all of this, the military leadership awarded him the death penalty.

The recognition they deserved was received more than 30 years later. For their services with a combined US Special Forces unit in March of 1967, the Special Operations Association in October 2002 honored Budda, 4A82, and his first handler Bob Brown, of the 39th IPSP. The association remembered Budda's actions "In Memoriam", and Bob was made a life member during a formal presentation at their annual meeting in Las Vegas. According to the association, up to that date Budda was the only Military Working Dog ever documented to have performed in their trained capacity behind enemy lines

in time of war. In early 1967, Budda and Bob of the 39th IPSP were selected for temporary duty assignment to the highly classified all-volunteer unit. Budda engaged in unconventional warfare and clandestine operations, roving deep into areas crawling with NVA soldiers, and led six top-secret expeditions "over the fence" into Laos. Budda's job as a Scout Dog in this role was to give silent advance warning of nearby enemy activity so the team members could remain undetected. Budda and Bob shared the knowledge of acts of remarkable valor that will never make the pages of history books. But nevertheless, the mission of a Scout Dog and his handler is to save and protect friendly forces. This they did, and did it well.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

by: R."Pete" Peters
 39th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog)
 173rd Airborne Brigade
 March 1966 - July 1967

Sit. Stay. Support.

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From the Archives



Photo: Members of the 1041st Security Police Squadron study a map during an early morning reconnaissance patrol near Phu Cat Air Base (AB), South Vietnam. January, 1967.

History: Phu Cat AB was the field test site for the six-month combat evaluation of the 1041st USAF Security Police Squadron, from 16 January to 4 July 1967. (Project Safe Side.)

As Project Safe Side was developed, 250 men assigned to the 1041st SPS (Test) trained in patrolling and intelligence-gathering for 15 weeks at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii., before the structure of the 1041st was finalized. Among the various flights utilized was a scout dog section consisting of 15 enlisted men and 9 scout dogs as combat elements.

Under the name Project Safe Side, the 1041st patrolled 26 miles of outer perimeter to test the feasibility of developing a USAF air base ground defense (ABGD) force. This is the precursor to the Security Force-concept in use today by the USAF.

During its 179-day tour at Phu Cat, the 1041st conducted 651 patrols, 155 ambushes, and destroyed more than 350 tunnels and fortifications without suffering any fatalities. Safe Side was a success.

USAF photo