

Join MWD TSA now so you won't miss any of the photos, stories, news and highlights of 2011!

Inside this issue:

China Grove Reunion for 62nd CT Team	2
Thanks /Supporter	4
October Odyssey	5
Our Artist Support	8
Anty's Home	9
MWD TSA Schedule	9
Photos	10

Over the course of this year, MWD TSA volunteers plan to visit various military installations.

Please know that MWD TSA travel policy states that -All travel costs incurred by anyone for MWD TSA are donated by the individual traveler. We do not use any supporters' donations to pay for our travel and wanted to let you know.

## *Wrapping It Up for the Holidays*



A handler in Iraq sends a big thank you note to the folks who supported him and his dog during Christmas last year; that would be MWD TSA and all of our donors.

Won't you help make the holidays brighter this year for a team serving in harm's way.

MWD TSA is preparing for the shipment of holiday boxes and we need your help.

Last year we sent holiday care packages to nearly 200 deployed dog handler teams. Each package was individually addressed and shipped to a particular service member and their dog.

Inside each box were treats, KONG toys, other sturdy dog toys, magazines, hand held games, grooming supplies and hand made cards and letters. We estimated an approximate value of about \$85.00 per box with \$12.50 to ship each box. This is why we are knocking on your door and asking you to

support our fundraising drive this holiday season.

We can't wait until December to get ourselves organized. We actually start shipping in just a few weeks to make that holiday cutoff for some of our Forward Operating Bases etc.

We know times are tough, but we are hoping that our supporters will understand the sacrifices being made by so many in spending their holidays in a distant land far from their family and friends. We are hoping that you will re-

spond with contributions or other assistance.

We received a heartfelt "thank you" from many of the handlers and veterinary staff that we sent packages to in 2009. One that I especially loved was the photo included above. This young man had plenty to do in the war zone, but he wanted to let all of you know that he appreciated what you did to support him.

MWD TSA humbly thanks you for your help and continued support.

www.mwdtsa.org

## Combat Trackers: 62nd IPCT Reunion -

This August has been 11 years that members of the 62nd Infantry Platoon Combat Trackers (IPCT) have reunited to share their unique stories and memories with bonds that few other people will ever understand. The experiences they shared in Vietnam were unique to Combat Trackers.

A typical Combat Tracker Team consisted of a team leader, a visual tracker who interpreted the cutting signs, such as broken or brushed twigs or bushes, a tracker dog, the dog handler who read the dog's reaction to the scent track, a cover man who gave fire cover to whichever tracker (dog/handler or visual) that was working on point, and a communications man.

While this was the basic model for Combat Tracking, the team could be modified based on the mission. The 62nd IPCT had a unique position for another dog, a Scout Dog, to be used in some places in front of the team. This was done because the LT in charge of this platoon

had been through Scout Dog School at Fort Benning and was aware of the extra dimension and skills that a Scout Dog could bring to the Combat Tracker missions.

The role of the Combat Tracker team was to find people: POWs, infantrymen, downed pilots and the enemy by following their scent trail. It was a very dangerous job with only an approximate 400 individuals having served in that role. Of this number, a reported 41 were killed in action and another 120 were wounded in action.

The Combat Tracker dogs, often Labrador retrievers or Lab/Beagle mixes, used ground scenting and followed the physical trail, much like we see bloodhounds track — only they completed their tracks much more quietly. They were very good at their jobs

The Scout Dogs, used air scenting techniques, and were also trained on the sounds of

winds hitting a tripwire. Because the German shepherd dog, or variations thereof, were used in the role of Scout Dog, their naturally keen herding eyes honed to follow movement of their flock were translated into additional skill sets in the jungle to assist with detecting movement.

The 62nd's Scout Dog handler, Leroy Habel, remembers arriving in Vietnam directly from Scout Dog School at Fort Benning. He and his dog were a true team, as were all the successful dogs and handlers. He had excelled at the on-leash training and even completed more advanced off-leash work with his dog, Major.

Upon arriving at Bien Hoa, he found he was face-to-face with a former instructor from Fort Benning, Sgt. Fuller, who according to Habel "forgot more about dogs than most handlers will ever know". Fuller recommended that Habel volunteer for the Combat Tracker position that Fuller

### PRICE OF FREEDOM

Price of Freedom Museum

2420 Weaver Road

China Grove, NC

Hours of operation vary:

[www.priceoffreedom.com](http://www.priceoffreedom.com)

Email:

[info@priceoffreedom.com](mailto:info@priceoffreedom.com)

Phone: 704-857-7474

Visit November 13, 2010 from 9:00AM to 3:00 PM—Pearl Harbor Memories.

Free Parking, Free Admission

needed to fill. As Combat Trackers were all volunteer, nobody could make Habel take the job. Habel protested at first, "I've never volunteered for a damn thing in this Army." Sgt. Fuller replied, "These boys will bring you home." Habel volunteered.

Another volunteer, Tom Brown tells his story starting in late October when one of the armor units called a tracker team out for a fresh trail.



**At left: Visual trackers, Estel Matt, "Tex" Spivey and dog handler, Steve Barton study a document at the "Price of Freedom" museum in China Grove, North Carolina.**

**At right: K. O. Mills, Team Leader/Platoon Sgt. and Leroy Habel, handler of Major, the Scout dog in the platoon, share a history.**





## Matthews, NC: Photos & Memories

"Sure enough it was a blood trail. There had been a short contact with the armor unit, the 9th, and by the signs there were about five or maybe six of the enemy, and a couple had been nicked pretty good." After putting together a small security element from the Calvary unit, the team crossed a small, swift stream about chest high to pick up the trail.

Following the cutting signs, it appeared that the enemy had stopped to cook, eat and tend to the wounded, but the Combat Trackers were moving quickly now.

Tom continues, "Now they knew we were on them. The trail wandered along, and my dog was pulling harder and harder. Leroy came forward a couple times to see how his dog would alert. It seems that Leroy's dog had already been alerting." The Combat Tracker Team was closing in. The fight would soon be upon them.

"We came back to the stream and a little place to cross. Song

Sorong and I had the point, and had not yet come out of the jungle, we weren't going to cross, just waiting for everyone to catch up. We were looking at a log on the other side of the stream, Song said "VC sleep here." All of a sudden an explosion went off, we both got clipped, and I was rolled out to the trail. Well the quarry had run into their support." Now instead of five or six injured enemy, there were about ten combatants.

"They had rigged a hasty command detonated small something. Song and I were both pinned down and hit."

"We were trying to make sure the folks we were following weren't going to bother the US forces any longer."

Combat requires that you fight and fight to win. As Patton once said, "No bastard ever won a war by dying for his country. He won it by making the other poor dumb bastard die for his country."

On that day, Tom Brown per-

formed his last mission in the field, but not before making sure that the folks they were seeking would never cause problems for US troops again.

Otis T019 was a product of a cutting edge breeding experiment to produce Super Dogs for the military. He came from a special bio research team at Walter Reed Army Hospital. Otis was part Labrador and part beagle. Both breeds are good trackers, the beagle is smaller and easier to maneuver on helicopters for insert and extraction in combat zones, while the Labrador genes helped remove some of the beagle's inbred traits of sounding when they sight quarry. Also, the lab genes giving the dark coloration found on Otis.

October of 1970 found Otis and his handler, Raymond Everhart, rappelling from a chopper near Song Be just south of the Cambodian border.

The call for a Combat Tracker

Team came after an Army unit happened across a small base camp for the Viet Cong. One enemy was captured, but the other eluded the infantry team and they needed to find and stop the man who had escaped.

Several trails led out of the village base camp with Otis finding the right trail to follow. On the trail out of the village, Otis alerted and his entire team hit the ground, followed moments later by the infantry men.

If Otis hadn't alerted, the entire unit would have walked straight into an ambush with likely dire consequences. This 62nd team saved many lives that day.

For this effort, George Franklin was awarded a Silver Star, Larry Lawless, Dieu Phouc, Rex Hill, Raymond Everhart and Otis were awarded the Bronze Star with the Valor Device, for heroic bravery in the face of the enemy.

Otis was one of only approximately 200 dogs out of 4200 that were repatriated to the United States at the end of their service.



**At left: Members of the 62nd Combat Trackers: Raymond Everhart with Otis (Tracker Dog), C.T. Hinely (Tracker Dog handler) and LeRoy Habel with Major (Scout Dog).**

**At right: Otis T019 after he was awarded the Bronze Star with the "V" Device by the 1st Cav Commanding General.**



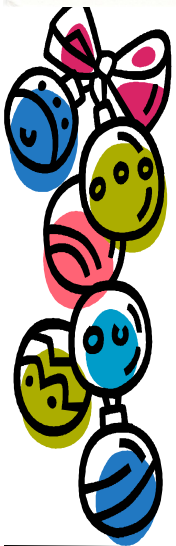




### Thanks to all of you!

We appreciate our veterinary contacts and their efforts on behalf of the dogs in their care.

Here's a thank you note received from one of our veterinarians down range after goodies received last Christmas



Thank you for the goodies. I took everything over to the kennel and they loved it. Thanks for all you do. Happy Holidays,

Rebecca



## Meet Owen and Gretchen, MWDTSA Supporters



You've met some of our handler friends and dogs recently. Now, I have the pleasure to introduce you to some of our supporters. Meet Owen and his Mal pal, Gretchen. Mals, officially known as Belgian Malinois, are one of the top two breeds used in our current Military Working Dog program. They are smart, swift and spirited, but as you can see, given the right circumstances, also make wonderful pets for households with chil-

dren. Mals are a herding breed, like German shepherds, but less well known to many in the general public.

Owen's mom, Susan, sent in a membership and a great pair of Doggles, water bowls and a FURminator which were sent out to our contact folks in Afghanistan for distribution to the dog most in need. Thanks, to Owen, his Mom and his pal, Gretchen for this great photo op.

# October Odyssey

By Dixie Whitman

The travel that we did was all paid for by those of us attending. We just want to reiterate that donated funds do not pay for personal travel.

For most of the month of October, MWD TSA officers, Kris Wilson and myself have been criss-crossing America with eight visits to kennels, an opportunity to see dog training at Lackland Air Force Base, a great reunion in San Antonio with Vietnam Air Force Handler friends and the German Shepherd National in Salt Lake City. This was a trip that will likely never be repeated, but was a chance to truly get out and get face to face with handlers and meet some of the dogs that we support. We can only briefly touch upon the people and dogs that we met along the way, but please know that we will continue to include photos and details on our Blog and Newsletter. And, all have touched us deeply and in a positive way.

We began by heading towards Columbus AFB, a great start to our trip which landed us in the small town of Columbus, Mississippi with a handful of dog handlers. This group was great fun to meet. A trip to the local Bar B Que joint gave us the opportunity to really talk dogs and get to know this terrific group.

The next day we took in Barksdale Air Force Base Kennels near Shreveport, Louisiana. I was so excited because the Kennelmaster was a handler that I had supported many years ago. Our excitement was tempered by the loss this kennel experienced in one of their older MWDs the day we arrived.

In addition to the shirts and KONGs that we brought for the handlers and dogs, we left a DVD at all of the Air Force Bases from the Air Force Handlers of Vietnam. While at Firehouse Subs eating lunch with the Barksdale guys, we called our friend, Vietnam Security Dog Handler, Ernie Childers, as he had been stationed at Barksdale for many years and he had a chance to talk with the cur-

rent Kennelmaster. Good times.

We spent some time in the heart of Texas before heading to Fort Hood for a day with the dog handlers there. It is a huge kennel and we had many contacts here, including several handlers that we had supported in Afghanistan and northern Iraq. We had several great demos done for us, including one by Toby and Tom, an SSD dog team that we supported while they were working in Afghanistan.

After the visit at Fort Hood, we travelled south to San Antonio, home of Lackland Air Force Base and the Dog Training School. In San Antonio, we met up with our friends from the Vietnam Security Police Association (VSPA) at their reunion. I was thrilled to meet Robert Pennington, a Navy handler who I supported on two tours in Iraq. It was even more fun to have him join us and surprise our friends, Bill Cummings and Kelly Bateman, who also supported Robert. It was a special day because Robert and his family are currently stationed outside the US, but just happened to be back visiting with family in the big state of Texas.

We joined the dog handlers of the VSPA and went with them on their tour of both the Working Dog Kennels at Lackland and the Training School. What a great day this was. The regular working kennels at Lackland had a great contingent of dog handlers and put on a superb demo.

Lackland trains dogs and handlers for almost all Department of Defense needs. Of special notes were two events, we got to eat lunch with all of the dog handlers that were there training. It seemed like there were about 150 or so...I lost count. With the help of Darrell Hagen, we found our girl, Lucy, an SSD dog who is at Lackland, being matched up with a new handler and has transitioned to being a Marine from having been an Army dog. For some amazing reason, I also managed to find Lucca's new handler, a Marine from California who smiled broadly when I mentioned that he was being matched up with a legend.

The dog training group put on great demos,

but we especially loved the Combat Tracker demo as that is one demo that we had never witnessed previously.

From San Antonio, we sprinted up to Salt Lake City environs for the German Shepherd National events and a visit to Hill Air Force Base, just north of town. As with the other bases, we found ready friends in the handlers whom we had previously supported. One of the great surprises is getting to meet Arek who is one of the most secure and self-confident dogs we've ever met.

At our event, we spent several days both in fundraising and in public education. Of special note was our guest handler, Mr. Richard "Dick" Leonard, a resident from the area who is a veteran dog handler from the 47th Infantry Platoon Scout Dog in Vietnam. Dick was able to speak with many German shepherd enthusiasts, including Sondra, a GSD Breeder and fancier who donated multiple German Shepherds to the military during the Vietnam Era. Theirs was a special and meaningful conversation on both ends: Sondra learning how much the dogs that served were loved and how they were used during the Vietnam War.

Heading back eastbound, we made our way to F.E. Warren AFB in Cheyenne, Wyoming. A great opportunity as the kennel was giving a demonstration to local high school students the day that we were there. All of the students were shy at first about trying on the "sleeve" but ultimately, it became sort of a badge of honor, connecting with many of these kids. U.S. War Dogs meet High School Students. U. S. War Dogs win them over.

Moving southbound to Colorado, we then went to Colorado Springs and visited two nearby kennels. First was Petersen AFB where we had one contact that we supported many years ago. He is now a trainer. At each base it seems we got a unique opportunity. In the middle of our visit, one of their handlers returned from Afghanistan. While we did



## October Odyssey &

not want to intrude on an emotional return, we were able to thank him personally for his service—an awesome opportunity.

Our last kennel was another big Army kennel at Fort Carson. The kennelmaster there is a personal friend with whom we had met several times during his time at Fort Gillem, south of Atlanta. The unique thing that we got to do at Fort Carson was to watch Army dog teams from across the country going through certification.

As observers, we sometimes forget all of the work required to get a team up to speed in Detection, Protection, Roadway Searches, Building Searches etc. This was a great opportunity to see a wide variety of dogs and skill levels. Some dogs made the grade and received their certifications and some, I'm sure, did not. What a cool opportunity! Thanks to Fort Carson.

Our trip was an amazing promise of something not yet articulated, an inchoate sense that we are reaching forward to something great.

Please enjoy some of the photos that we took along the way.

### Doggy Rehab

While at Lackland AFB, we were given a tour of the new K9 Hospital. It is impressively high tech. Here an MWD works on a treadmill to rehab from an injury.



### Fort Hood

This huge base gave us a warm welcome. A few of the handlers we knew from previous deployments were there. Thanks to Jodi & Tom for coming in on their off day!



## Winners of VSPA Memorabilia Event

K-9 Memorabilia Donation Fundraiser Update from VSPA Reunion, San Antonio, TX

Thanks for your efforts and support of the VSPA Fundraiser in San Antonio for Feed The Dawgs and Old Dawgs and Pups.

Through your efforts we were able to raise a total \$3,000.00 that was split between the two groups. Winner of the first prize was SrA. Samuel Lerman, Unit Historian, 459th Security Forces Squadron, Andrews Air Force Base. Winner of the second prize was Phil Carroll, VDHA and VSPA. Phil is the new President of the VSPA. John Risse K-9, donated two hand carved diamond willow walking sticks that were won by two VSPA members at the Saturday night dinner.

Again, thank you for your donations. John Homa K-9 VDHA / VSPA Ken Neal K-9 VDHA / VSPA. (This is the result of fundraising for the Vietnam Security Police Association—this is a different organization than MWD TSA. We have many similar goals and we support their efforts.)

### For Smart Phone Users:

The MWD TSA blog may be also read (or followed) on your smart phone by pointing your mobile browser to <http://mblog.mwdtsa.org> thanks to our great tech guru Jonathan Wahl.



## Photos of Places and Faces

Photos taken by Krisellen Wilson or Dixie Whitman

### Elvis and the Columbus Handlers

We went out to lunch at a local Bar B Que hangout with the handlers from Columbus Air Force Base. The food was great, but even more fun were the handlers. They posed for me by the stained glass Elvis in the window. They are just south of Tupelo, Mississippi, Elvis' home town. (Thanks to all of you guys for everything.) Great photo.



### Left: KONG fan

Dogs at all of the Kennels were given a KONG from MWDTSA. We found that all of the dogs seemed to love some variation of the KONG toy, although the labs do have a great love of tennis balls, too.

(As a reminder, photos of the dogs & handlers do not indicate in any way that they support MWDTSA or any other organization.)

### Right: Patja, Retired MWD

There are a several dogs that I would like to sneak back home with me. (You know who you are!) This sweet girl is one of them. Her name is Patja and she is a retired Military Working Dog that was adopted by a former Air Force Handler who served in both Vietnam and Thailand.





## Artists Send their Support

When I shared with my friend, Joyce Gibson, that I would be heading out to attend the GSD National in Utah trying to raise awareness of and donations for the deployed dog teams, she asked me what I was going to sell. "T-shirts, silicone wristbands and memberships." was my answer. She quickly started the gears moving and recommended that I take some small matted art. In fact, she offered to paint a new piece of artwork to take with me. Seeing as we have some other artist friends, she recommended that we contact them to see if we could "borrow" their copyrights and print off a dozen or so prints to be sold of various pieces of dog art. I've known Joyce just short of 20 years now and I have to say, this is the exhibition of true friendship. Not only do you care about your friends, but you also support their passions, especially when it comes to dogs. Please take some time and check out the information and websites of the following artists who donated their talent. We thank them so much. And, check out our website for information on how to order some great dog art.

**Joyce Gibson's** contribution to our fall fundraising efforts include this beautiful oil painting with a focal point of the Military Working Dog. Also seen in the photo are images of the American flag and the leash leading back through an impressionistic background to the firmness of the dog handler's hand. We anticipate that this piece will be available for ordering on our website. In the meantime, email me if you're interested. Joyce also completed this beautiful water color of a German Shepherd Dog doing what it was bred to do—herd sheep and is donating prints of this gorgeous piece, as well. Joyce and her husband, Mike, specialize in high quality giclee prints on canvas, photo restoration and online art galleries presenting collections of symbolism, pre-Raphaelite, art nouveau and gothic, pieces among others. Stop by for a visit and don't forget to visit the "dog" gallery. <http://www.illusionsgallery.com/Gibson.html>



**Paula Zan** has been supporting worthy dog related charities for many years. In fact, it was through a donation of some of her wonderful artwork for German shepherd rescue that I discovered her amazing talent. Her breed of choice is the Standard Poodle and Paula is pictured here with her Galen. You can visit her website for animal art prints, originals, stained glass, note cards, collectors' plates and more. I love her stuff and think you will, too. You can also find Paula's artwork available on eBay, please have a look, I know you'll find something wonderful. Go shopping here: <http://www.mythling.com/>



**Erin McKee** a friend of a friend, was gracious enough to allow us the use of her portrait of Luna. One of Erin's abiding influences in her life was her experience with animals growing up, especially dogs, as she and her family bred and trained German Shepherds, and also had a rabbitry with over 200 rabbits. In addition, Erin had a horse she loved to ride in the foothills of the mountains of Southern Utah as a teenager, various other livestock, and lots of cats! You can find some of her work at: <http://erinmckee.com/site/pet-portraits>

We thank you Erin for her generosity in sharing her talent in support of America's Military Working Dogs.

Special thanks to Southern Moulding, a great company in Kennesaw, GA that provided the mat board to mat all of the prints and to Illusions Gallery (Joyce and Mike) for all of their work in getting the prints matted and ready to sell. Thank you, thank you, thank you. All artwork is copyrighted by the individual artists.





## Anty's Home!

We've been able to support Robert, a Navy dog handler, through a couple of deployments and were thrilled that he was able to adopt his MWD, Ante, after retirement. Here is a recent photo that we received of the entire family. Can't imagine that there may be a Texas Longhorn fan in this bunch???

Great photo and great family. We were actually able to connect with Robert in San Antonio on our visit through while he was home visiting family.

Thanks to the Newnan Kennel Club for their donation.

## *Schedule of Events:*

Event Name	Dates and Details	
Christmas Trees Please stop by T C Country in Cherokee County to adopt a dog team.	October 30 throughout the 4th quarter, please stop by and pick out a dog to support and donate a needed item or funding to send the package.	100 Heritage Town Parkway Canton, GA 30114 (770) 479-8926 to adopt by phone.
Pack and Ship Holiday Packages in the North Georgia area.	Dates/Locations are still being determined— Please let us know if you have an interest in helping pack up holiday wishes.	Contact Dixie @ mwdtsa.dixie@yahoo.com or
Hearts of the Holiday—If you would like to have cards or letters included in one of our boxes, please send it to us in an unsealed envelope.	These may be mailed at any time, but in order to ensure that Christmas cards arrive in time to be included in the care packages. These will need to be received before November 15th.	You may mail to: MWD TSA, P.O. Box 5864, Canton, GA 30114  Please remember, these must be received from you unsealed.

Thanks to many individual members of the German Shepherd Dog Club of America for their amazing support of our military dogs at the National in Farmington, Utah. We appreciate you!

**Military Working Dog Team  
Support Association, Inc.**

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**We are on the web!!**

**www.mwdtsa.org**

**Follow our Blog for more photos.**

**Sit. Stay. Support.**



PLEASE RECYCLE  
BY SENDING TO  
A FRIEND



*Courtney's Shirt Goes to Barksdale*



The handlers of Barksdale AFB pose with their Courtney shirts. What an awesome day spent with these great handlers! Thanks guys, for all of your time. Where will Courtney's shirt show up next?

**Brent Olson and Blek in Afghanistan**



**U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Brent Olson, a military dog handler, and Blek, a military working dog, accompany U.S. Soldiers with Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, during a clearing mission in the Zirat Mountain Area, Waza Kwah District, Paktika province, Afghanistan, July 7, 2010. The purpose of the mission is to disrupt anti-Afghan forces and find enemy caches. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jeffrey Alexander/Released)**