

Support MWD TSA now and you won't miss any of the photos, stories, news and highlights of 2012!

Kennel Talk is now an award winning MWD publication!

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What skills can you share to support our dog teams? We are looking for volunteers in:

- Fundraising
- Grant writing
- Giving presentations
- Soliciting in kind - donations
- Newsletter editing
- Social networking

Contact us for more info:
info@mwdtsa.org

Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

MWD TSA KENNEL TALK



Cici was in need of special boots and we were able to send her a set of Ruffwear Bark'n Boots thanks to your generous donations.

What Good Do Your Donations Do?

By Dixie Whitman

People who support us like to know where their donations are going and what they are accomplishing when they partner with Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc. (MWD TSA). Here's the good news - you are impacting dog teams from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines.

MWD TSA routinely sends care and comfort packages to deployed dog teams from all branches of service working in harm's way. In general, we include items like KONG toys, grooming supplies, collapsible water bowls, etc. for the dogs

and, for the handlers, we include items like extra socks, T-shirts, treats, magazines: a touch of home and a morale booster, as we have often heard from the handlers.

For example, here is one recent feedback:

"I just wanted to let you know I got the package today. Thank you so much from both Daks and me. He LOVES the squeaky balls and the KONGs you can stuff are great. I just gave him a bath yesterday, but in a couple days I'm gonna give him a bath with that

shampoo, it smells great. Again thank you so much we can't tell you how much it means. I'll keep in touch."

And another: *"The issue we are currently running into is the heat on the ground. Currently it is 116 degrees outside. In some of the areas we have to work the dogs on black surface roads. The MWDs without booties get tender feet quickly."*

Again, thank you for supporting our dogs. The MWD teams are vital to our safety on this side of the world."

www.mwdtsa.org

We try our best to support special requests when they meet our mission statement. Here are some of the very special requests that we have supplied recently. CiCi, an older German shepherd dog working in an undisclosed location in a very sandy area was beginning to have issues with her feet. Her Kennel Master felt that she still wanted to work and had both the desire and drive, but was in need of special boots to help her remain comfortable in her work. We are happy to say that we were able to send Miss CiCi a new set of "wheels", known as Ruff Wear Bark'n Boots by Grip Tex.

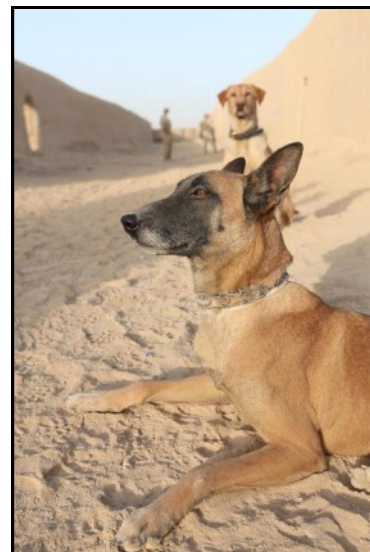
Another dog handler wanted something special for his dog in terms of toys and asked if

we could help out. He needed something for his dog to tug instead of chew. No problem as one of our sponsors had just sent us a toy that matched his needs.

One dog was having some bad breath issues and the handler was asking for something chew-wise to help; thanks to our good friends at Top Dogs Pet Boutique, we know that elk antler is a good answer to this problem.

MWDTSA had sent support of dog toys, care and comfort items to all of the handlers at a Marine kennel. In the waning days of their deployment, they lost a handler to an Improvised Explosive Device (IED). As the remainder of the unit rotated home, they

Right: Military explosive detection dogs deployed with Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment (3/5) await commands from their handlers as they practice their daily routine at Forward Operating Base Nelay, Helmand province, Afghanistan, Dec. 8, 2010. Dog handlers attached to 3/5 Marines trained their dogs on a routine basis to prepare them for their tasks in support of the International Security Assistance Force. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Brandon M. Owen/Released)



Below: Marines with 2nd Law Enforcement Battalion huddle together in silence in remembrance of Sgt. Joshua Ashley during a memorial ceremony at the Protestant chapel aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune Sept. 12. Ashley, a military dog handler, was killed in Afghanistan in July while conducting operations in Helmand province. (Photo by Sgt. Bobby J. Yarbrough)



prepared a Memorial Service for their fallen comrade and asked if we would attend and if we could help with an oak box to display the American flag flown at the service. Sadly, we were not able to be there, but we know that the ceremony to remember and honor their friend and fellow handler was a helpful, healing event. MWDTSA, on behalf of our donors, was honored to be able to support their request.

You make a difference every time you support MWDTSA with a donation, a purchase, by volunteering or by passing the word. Thank you so much, to all of our supporters, on behalf of the brave men and bravest of women who work with America's amazing military working dogs.

Military Working Dogs, Our Brothers in Arms

By Airman 1st Class Brady Hunter 20th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

SHAW AIR FORCE BASE, S.C.

-- A military working dog (MWD) is a canine military member who aides their handler in performing security patrols or searching for and detecting explosives and narcotics.

All MWDs, from every branch of the military, are sent to Lackland AFB, Texas for fundamental training. The training is composed of a 90-day course where the MWD is taught basic aggression and search tactics.

Training and accommodations for each dog at Lackland costs roughly \$6,500. Once they graduate from initial training, the dogs are then sent to their assigned base.

When MWDs initially arrive at Shaw, they are paired up with a handler. The handler then conducts report training, which familiarizes the MWD with its new surroundings while building a mutual bond between the two.

"You get to play and see the dogs advance and shape them into the dogs that protect our country," said Tech. Sgt. Alishia Nastas, 20th Security Forces Squadron canine trainer.

Once the MWD becomes comfortable with its handler and the environment, both the handler and the MWD must undergo a patrol certification test prior to advanced patrol and detection training.

The test is overseen by the kennel master and consists of a list of commands that the handler and MWD must execute together. Once the kennel master approves of their compatibility, the MWD is then allowed to begin further advanced training.

"Just about every day we're doing some sort of training," said Staff Sgt. Jonathan Cooper, 20th Security Forces Squadron canine handler.

When an MWD is assigned to a base, they stay at that base until they retire. An MWD retirement ceremony is just like any other. The honor guard comes out and the national anthem plays. Next, a few words are spoken by the kennel master and the handler about the MWD's career. The dog is then issued the certification of retirement from the kennel master and is officially retired.

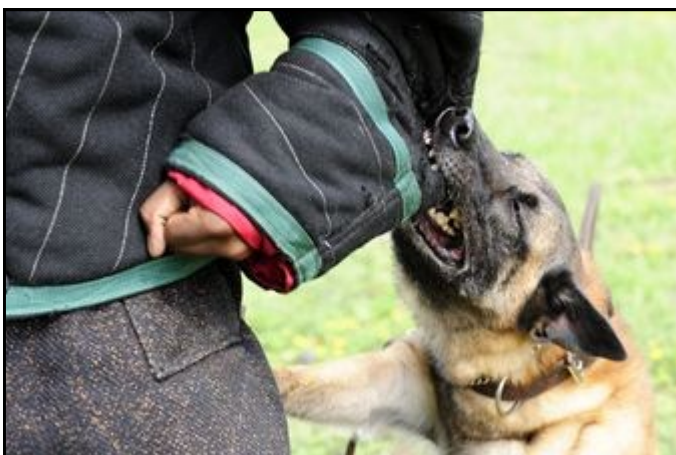
There is no set age that a MWD must retire, they may continue to work as long as they are physically able, and can perform their duties. The average age for an MWD to retire is 10 due to the wear and tear on their bodies from multiple climate changes, rigorous training and their daily duties.

Once an MWD is officially retired, they can go one of two routes: either return to Lackland to help train new



Above: U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Anthony Despina, 20th Security Forces Squadron canine handler, demonstrates the "lock jaw" method with Military Working Dog Astra at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., Aug. 17, 2012. The "lock jaw" implies that the dog will bite down on its target and never release its bite until instructed by the handler. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Hunter Brady/Released)

Below: An Airman attempts to hold off Military Working Dog Astra at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., Aug. 17, 2012. All military working dogs from every branch of the military are sent to Lackland Air Force Base, Texas for fundamental training. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Hunter Brady/Released)



handlers or adoption. To be eligible for adoption, they first must be medically cleared by an assigned military veterinarian and pass an aggression test.

The veterinarian checks to make sure the dogs are medically healthy before allowing them to be put up for adoption. This is done to prevent a sickly MWD from being adopted; leaving the new owner with a dog that would require significant financial and physical upkeep due to injuries sustained during its prior duties.

After being medically cleared, the aggression test is conducted. This test is used to ensure the dog will not show hostile behavior when provoked. The aggression test must be video

-taped and sent to the 341st Training Squadron at Lackland. There, it is determined whether or not the dog can be put up for adoption.

If the dog is cleared by the squadron and is medically healthy, it can be put up for adoption. If the dog fails the aggression test, they are sent to either Lackland or a local police department to train new handlers.

The MWD's career, to include training, food and water, housing and medical care generally costs more than \$100,000.

Even though they cost a lot of money to train, they do the jobs that nobody else can, concluded Tech. Sgt. Jemal Jones, 20th Security Forces Squadron kennel master.



Top: U.S. Air Force Military Working Dog Barras leaps over an obstacle during a routine exercise at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., Aug. 17, 2012. All military working dogs from every branch of the military are sent to Lackland Air Force Base, Texas for fundamental training. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Hunter Brady/Released)

Middle: U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Johnathan Cooper, 20th Security Forces Squadron canine handler, poses with Military Working Dog Astra at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., Aug. 17, 2012. All MWDs from every branch of the military are sent to Lackland Air Force Base, Texas for fundamental training. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Hunter Brady/Released)

Bottom: U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Johnathan Cooper, 20th Security Forces Squadron canine handler, pets and talks to Military Working Dog Astra in her kennel at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., Aug. 17, 2012. All military working dogs from every branch of the military are sent to Lackland Air Force Base, Texas for fundamental training. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Hunter Brady/Released)



Getting My Toes Wet

By Dixie Whitman

A familiar name popped up in my "Inbox" a couple of hours ago. A name that made my mouth curl into a big grin and paste a smile squarely in my heart. Chris. Yes, it seems like a very common name for young men of a certain age, but this Chris Calloway is special because he was the first dog handler that I had the privilege of supporting while he was deployed in Afghanistan. He was before MWD TSA was fashioned into an organization; Chris was me getting my toes wet.

Even though he was Navy, I met Chris at an event that I had worked on at Fort Benning. He was there with his wonderful dog, Rex, honoring some of the Vietnam Dog Handlers. I again met him the next year at King's Bay Naval

Submarine Base and learned that he was soon to be deployed down range. "What could he use? What could I send?" These were questions I asked as he headed for those outrageous mountains. Afghanistan mountains in the winter? You have to be kidding me. I added toe warmers to my list.

Daily, it seemed, I would get emails reporting as much as he could reasonably tell me. I worried on days the emails didn't come; the worry was with good reason. Downed chopper, firefights, special ops missions, are some pretty scary events. Some of the news was filtered, again for Operational Security. I knew that he and Rex had performed marvelously and as they headed home from their

successful deployment, my conversations with his Kennel Master solidified my reasoning that Rex should be honored as the Hero Dog he was.

It seemed appropriate that an honor, such as this, was officially bestowed by the German Shepherd Dog Club of America (GSDCA). It meant a great deal to Chris, who was feted at the 2005 GSDCA National in St. Louis. But, as it turns out, there were more to come.

And, thus began our search for those who had performed amazing things as recognized by their peers down range. As I look back now, it's funny that the heroes came from all branches of service, almost as if it had been planned in some sort of naïve attempt at rationing heroism. Navy, Ma-

rine, Air Force and Army; each with their own unique history to tell.

Chris and Rex (who continued to point out drugs in the middle of a firefight), Chris and Lucca (whose nose tracked down big weapons buried deep, deep, deep), Al and Tess (who found human remains buried in the sand), Phillip and Rico (who detected and stopped a big event from happening) and Tom and Toby (whose nose led the way to save a trooper's life).

Hero status is not something we award often, there have been only five so far. In fact, many of these wonderful hero dogs have since passed on – a sad yardstick measuring time. But, join me at the website and have a fresh look at these grand old veteran dog heroes as they once were, in their prime.



Left: United States Navy Petty Officer MA1 Chris Calloway and Rex in Afghanistan.

Right: Chris still working a dog down range, but now with a contractor.

Heroes

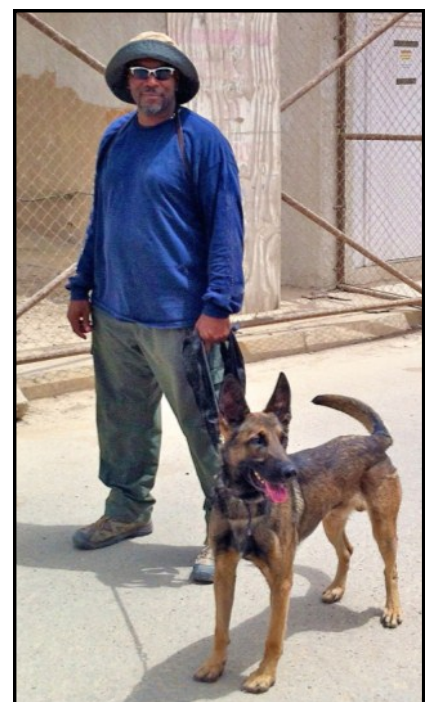
Chris Calloway and Rex:
<http://www.mwdtsa.org/calloway.html>

Chris Willingham and Lucca:
<http://www.mwdtsa.org/lucca.html>

Al Dodds and Tess:
<http://www.mwdtsa.org/tess.html>

Phillip Mendoza and Rico:
<http://www.mwdtsa.org/rico.html>

Thomas Jackson and Toby:
<http://www.mwdtsa.org/tomtoby.html>



2013 Calendar Debuts

The 2013 Military Working Dog calendar that MWD TSA has produced is a stunning photographic journey with a multitude of dogs and their handlers from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and one historic Coast Guard photo. Each month's cover photo is a superb vignette of our military working dog teams. Also included monthly, is an array of beautiful candid snapshots of furry MWD faces gracing each calendar page. Additionally, the calendar is filled with important doggy dates.

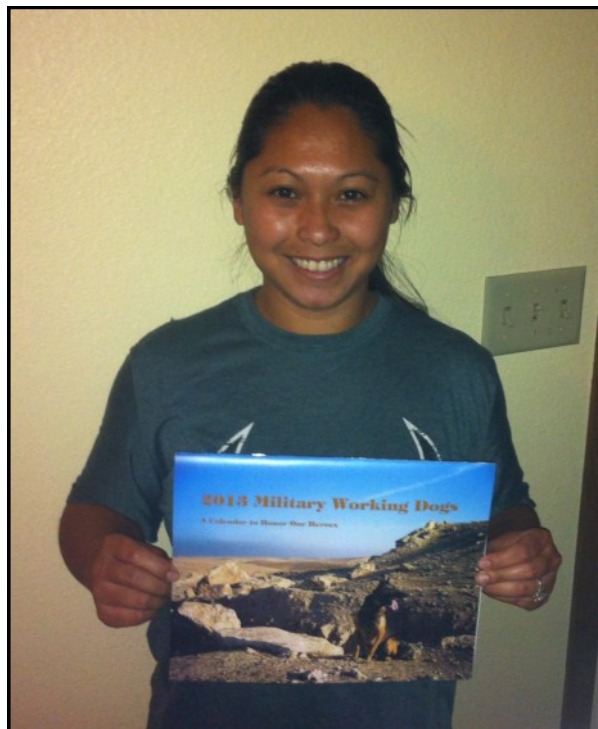
Here are some early reviews:
"Just received my 2013 calendar... It is beautiful! You really don't want to miss this chance to get a gorgeous calendar and support a good cause!"

"The calendars are beautiful. I ordered two for gifts. You have done a brilliant job."

Some of the images were taken by the dog handlers themselves, many were taken by very talented Department of Defense (DOD) photographers and a few were taken by MWD TSA President, Dixie Whitman. And, we must add that everything in this calendar was approved by the DOD. We are very proud of this product and we think it's a great way to show your support and enjoy beautiful military K9s.

Please order your calendars now. They are selling fast and we don't want to disappoint any supporters who would love to see these gorgeous dogs each and every month of 2013.

MWD TSA Board member, Chan Follen, displays the 2013 Calendar. They may be ordered at:
<http://mwdtsa.org/estorec.html>



A Visit to Lackland

By Jeanne Dedrick



Left: Tech Sgt. Adams

Since becoming involved with MWD TSA I have been "working behind the scenes" to solicit donations for care packages or write up the monthly minutes or hopefully encourage others in their roles in MWD TSA.

In August my husband and I attended his youngest grandson's graduation from Air Force Basic Training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, TX. So I took this opportunity to be more "hands on" and deliver t-shirts

and Kong toys to the Security Dog Handlers at Lackland. Due to the many family activities associated with a grandson graduating, I did not have time to view a dog demonstration or take the handlers to lunch. But I still felt a bit like Santa Claus delivering my goodies. And Tech. Sgt. Adams was so very gracious to meet me. I certainly hope I have more opportunities to do this kind of thing and with enough time to see the dogs work and enjoy a meal with the handlers!

Pet Festival at Top Dogs Pet Boutique



On a brilliant Sunday in September, MWD TSA was invited to participate in the annual Pet Festival at Top Dogs Pet Boutique in Kennesaw, GA. Those attending on behalf of MWD TSA were Dixie and Jerry Whitman and Ann Wilkerson.

The yearly event celebrates dogs and dog lovers with contests, fundraising raffles, a midway lined with vendor tents and lots of food. Attendees know that Top Dogs has great food and quality

toys and that 10% of the sales from that day is divvied up between two worthy animal charitable organizations.

MWD TSA has partnered with Top Dogs on numerous events and were delighted to participate. While this event appears to be better attended by the small dog crowd, we did see a few collies, a Bernese mountain dog and the ubiquitous Labrador retriever. The great news is that our Military Working

Dogs and handlers are beloved by small and large dog owners alike and we had a great day selling T-shirts and calendars.

Our beautiful friend from Invisible Fence, Jody McGlothlin, joined us for the day coordinating the paw painting. It's finger painting for dogs. The attendees loved it and were grateful in the way of donations to MWD TSA as a thank you for their new refrigerator art. Thanks to Jody's hard

work, we added over \$100 to our donation jar.

At the end of the day, MWD TSA was selected as one of only two participating charitable organizations to receive half of the proceeds for the day. We are delighted to be able to turn these funds into toys, gear and treats for our hard working deployed military working dogs.

Thanks to Top Dogs for inviting us and for their determined dedication to make dogs the beneficiaries of this great event.

San Francisco Fleet Week



These Camp Pendleton handlers with their dogs attended San Francisco Fleet Week. The handlers did dog demonstrations as part of Fleet Week and were supported by MWD TSA on their last deployment in Afghanistan.

Thanks to A.J. Nieto for sharing this dynamic photo.

MWD TSA Booth at SoCal Dock Dog Club Event

By Richard Baumer

MWD TSA had a booth at the annual members meeting of the SoCal Dock Dog Club. The event was held at Prado Dam east of Los Angeles. Thirty-five members, plus their dogs and families attended. The annual event is held to recognize volunteers who have helped throughout the year in setting up the 40-foot dock for practices, to confirm election results for officers and board members for the coming year and to hold a memorial ceremony for member dogs that

have passed away. Members of the club compete in dock dog events throughout the West.

It went very well and the club President suggested that MWD TSA could collect donations at every meeting throughout the remainder of the year.

SoCal Dock Dog Club:
www.socaldockdogs.com/



Above: The booth was set up and manned by Richard Baumer, a retired Vietnam era Army Col., in support of MWD TSA at the Southern California Dock Diving Dogs event.

MWD TSA Attends Adopt-A-Thon

October 6, 2012 was a beautiful sunny Saturday at the campus of the Cobb County Animal Shelter in Marietta, GA. We attended to spread the word about the work of Military Working Dogs and support the county's animal shelter population in their efforts to get adopted by good homes.

We were excited to meet an old friend, JoAnn Birrell, who is now a County Commissioner in Cobb County. She stopped by with her adopted dog, Sporty, to have his paw prints made. JoAnn also caught one of the local K9s, Roddy. That alone made the trip worth it!

We met some really great dogs, including Joshua and Simba, who had their Paw

Prints made by our good friend, Jody McGlothlin, of Invisible Fence and our volunteer, Ann Wilkerson.

A handful of sales were made, but more importantly, we hope some of the many folks who opted to take home our newsletter or business cards will continue to follow our events and become supporters and advocates.

From Top:

K9 Officer Bartlett instructs JoAnn Birrell on wearing the sleeve

Officer Bartlett's partner Roddy and the sleeve

Roddy relaxing after the demonstration.



Military Working Dog Team Support
Association, Inc.

Sit. Stay. Support.

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We are on the web!! See our Blog!
www.mwdtsa.org

Kennel Talk is the proud recipient
of GSDCA Special Newsletter

Please Recycle by Sending to a Friend



From Our Historical Files
Military Working Dogs and handlers
from:

(above) World War II

(photo courtesy of the National Archives)

(below) the Vietnam Era

(photo courtesy of the DOD)

