

April 2014  
Award Winning  
Monthly Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue 4

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Kennel Talk is an award  
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Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

## MWD TSA KENNEL TALK



**Photo above: In the mud pit during the Endurance event.**

**Winners in the Endurance Event were:**

- 1st - MA3 Constenius/ MWD Szi Szi - 32nd St Navy**  
**2nd - MA2 Cox/ MWD Crash - 32nd St Navy**  
**3rd - Cpl Barnhart/ MWD Dixie - MCPD Camp Pendleton USMC**

**Photo: Cpl Sarah Wolff-Diaz/MCB CP PAO**

## 2014 Military Iron Dog III Weekend at Camp Pendleton

By Dick Baumer

On Feb 8-9 at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton in Calif., I was privileged to attend some awesome events. On Saturday the non-profit "Feed the Dawgs" group hosted a steak BBQ for over 100 Pendleton MWD handlers and their families on the grounds of the Rancho Santa Margarita Ranch House, formerly the commandant's quarters. It was just one of dozens of BBQs the group hosts annually at military kennels of all services throughout the

West Coast, Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountain states.

The event was the kick-off of the Military Iron Dog III competition on Sunday and the first time the competition has been held here. The event attracted 29 MWD teams from Marine, Navy, Air Force units and even a team from the Coast Guard.

Following the presentation of our National Flag and a prayer, the guests heard comments by

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Brigadier General John W. Bullard, Jr., Commanding General, MCI West-MCB Camp Pendleton. We sat down to a superb meal, served by the "Dawgs" volunteers, including the 90-year-old Mom of the founder, Jon Hemp. The steaks were served from a custom trailer grill rig much like you would see at a professional BBQ competition. It was donated to the "Dawgs" by the parents of a fallen Marine handler.

A surprise visitor, GySgt Chris Willingham, former handler of MWD Lucca, dropped in for a steak. Chris was on base for his last stop of a 6-week recruiting tour for the USMC Embassy Guard force. Lucca, who he adopted in 2012, was home with his family in Quantico. He knew most of the kennel masters, handlers and staff and promised to root for the Pendleton handlers on Sunday.

The MWD TSA provided Kong Classics and Kong Air Footballs to the Camp Pendleton handlers from the Military Police and MEU kennels as well as to competitors who were there for the all-service challenge the next day. I also had a chance to visit some of the Pendleton handlers and their families individually at lunch. I enjoyed hearing from Cpl Cody Smith about the exploits of his MWD Kaosz and Cpl Tyler Barnhart explained that his MWD Dixie's 90lbs. might be a handicap. Little did I know that the



**Above: Navy MWD Crash demonstrates his take-down skills.**



**Left: Navy MWD team working the Detection event .**

**Photos : Cpl Sarah Wolff-Diaz / MCB CP PAO**

## 2014 Iron Dog III Results

### Best Unit

- 1st 32nd St Naval Base
- 2nd Camp Pendleton
- 3rd MCRD San Diego

### Top Dawg/Dog

- 1st - MA3 Constenius/MWD Szi Szi - 32nd St Navy
- 2nd - Cpl Barnhart/MWD Dixie - MCPD Camp Pendleton USMC
- 3rd - Cpl Griffin/ MWD SITA - MCRD San Diego USMC

### Detection

- 1st - OFC Merhar/ MWD Benji- MCPD Camp Pendleton USMC
- 2nd - MA3 Constenius/ MWD Szi Szi - 32nd St Navy
- 3rd - Cpl Smith/ MWD Kaosz - MCPD Camp Pendleton USMC

### Patrol

- 1st - MA2 Ramsey/ MWD Rex - 32nd St Navy
- 2nd - Cpl Griffin/ MWD Sita - MCRD San Diego USMC
- 3rd - MA3 Constenius/ MWD Szi Szi - 32nd St Navy

### Endurance

- 1st - MA3 Constenius/ MWD Szi Szi - 32nd St Navy
- 2nd - MA2 Cox/ MWD Crash - 32nd St Navy
- 3rd - Cpl Barnhart/ MWD Dixie - MCPD Camp Pendleton USMC

### Hardest Hitting

- 1st - Cpl Barnhart/ MWD Dixie - MCPD Camp Pendleton USMC
- 2nd - MA2 Marsh/ MWD Jimmi - 32nd St NAVY

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next day they would be among the outstanding teams in the all-service MWD competition.

The teams assembled early Sunday at Lake Oneill for a briefing and drawing for starting sequence in each of the four events. These included patrolling, explosives detection and a 1.3-mile endurance course. The course included a low-crawl mud pit as well as an uphill "carry your dog" leg and an obstacle course that required handlers to lift their dogs over and under hurdles. The endurance winners were a Navy team from 32nd Street in San Diego, MA3 Constenius and his MWD Szi Szi. Dixie and her handler, in the first set of teams became hung up in a camo net draped across the mud pit and lost valuable time—the net was removed for the rest of the competitors.

The final event was "Hardest Hitting" and involved a volunteer in a full bite suit being pursued and taken down. The "dummy" was heard to remark that the winner, MWD Dixie, who knocked him 5-feet through the air before he hit the ground, "almost took my kidney out." MWD Crash, a 15-lb. Navy Terrier or "pocket" dog (also referred to as a "bilge" dog by other service handlers) drew applause for his aggressive and tenacious "take down" demo.

The team with the highest scores in the patrolling, detection and endurance run earned the "Top Dawg/Dog" trophy (MA3 Constenius and MWD Szi Szi, from 32nd St Navy kennels) and the unit with the highest scores overall took home the "Best Unit" trophy (also 32nd St Navy). Camp Pendleton was second in best unit and Barnhart and Dixie took second in "Top Dawg/Dog," third in "Endurance," and first in "Hardest Hitting."

OFC Merhar and MWD Benji from MCPD Camp Pendleton took first in the "Detection" event, and MA2 Ramsey and MWD REX from 32nd St Navy won top honors in "Patrolling."

Our hats are off to the "Dawgs," a great group who support MWD teams here at their home stations.



**Above: Competitors compare notes after the Endurance event.**

**Below: Uphill, with dog...not even half way yet!**

**Photos: Cpl Sarah Wolff-Diaz/MCBCP PAO**

**Left: Dick Baumer (MWD TSA) and Jon Hemp (Dawgs).**



## Gone Fishin'



***Below: Allison Merrill with retired MWD Remmy, a regular at Sun Dog Boarding Kennel.***



The second quarter care packages are themed Gone Fishin'. It is only fitting that the packing event on April 26th is to be hosted by MWD TSA volunteer, Allison Merrill in Traverse City, Leelanau County, Mich. Leelanau County is noted for the Great lakes and abundance of fresh water lakes, and is home to attractions such as the Sleeping Bear Sand Dunes, Historic Fishtown Leland, miles of secluded beaches and gorgeous sunsets over the water.

The Gone Fishin' Care Packages will be loaded with many items from Traverse City, Mich., including fish decorated cookies, local cherry products (Traverse City

is Cherry capital of the world) and a variety of fish decorated or themed items for the MWDs and their handlers.

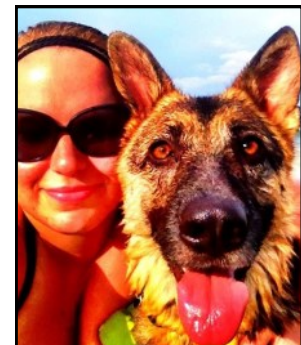
Allison Merrill is the owner of Sun Dog Boarding Kennel, a cage free boarding facility that offers doggie daycare, where the dogs spend their days in a big play yard playing ball, chase and generally romping in the sun or snow. One of the regulars at Sun Dog Boarding Kennel is a retired MWD, Remmy, owned by a retired Vietnam Vet Dog Handler. Another regular is a local police K9.

Allison is an avid MWD TSA volunteer. She has organized a number of local fundrais-



***Above: Allison's dogs enjoy time spent on the many lakes in Leelanau County.***

***Below: Allison with one of her dogs.***



***Below: Zen in attendance at one of the many events where Allison has set up a MWD TSA booth.***



MWD TSA 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 financial donations:

Ms. Arlene Cadel  
 Ms. Katherine Ford  
 Ms. Pamela Kendrick  
 Pet Brigade  
 Mr.. Stephen Redden  
 Ms. Kristen San Antonio  
 Ms. Linda Thames  
 Unleashed by Petco



Gone Fishin' continued from page 4

ers, supports the care packages with donations and takes her German Shepherd Dogs to local dog events to promote the work of MWD TSA.

MWD TSA VP Col (Ret.) Dick Baumer will be there too, travelling from his home in California to help with the packing and shipping.

Dick attends most of the quarterly care package packing

events. He is responsible for soliciting and coordinating the shipping of many of our in-kind donations. It is a huge undertaking. The success of his endeavors can be seen by the quantity and variety of the items that MWD TSA is able to provide the MWD teams that we support.

Dick was kind enough to share some of his photos.



**Above: Fort Benning, June 1968: (L to R) CPT John Anderson, XO USASD Det., BG (Ret.) Ed Baumer (Dick's Dad), 2LT Dick Baumer, Training Officer USASD Det.**

**Below: One year later (L to R) 1LT Dick Baumer, CO, Lucky B383, SGT Lee Simpson, Lucky's handler at the 62nd Inf Plt (Combat Tracker), RVN.**



**In Dick's own words: "These are some of my favorite photos from Vietnam, 62nd Infantry Platoon (Combat Tracker). Our platoon rear at Phouc Vinh was a former 25th Inf Div Scout Dog kennel, and they built an obstacle course with jumps, tunnels made from old 55 gal drums, a 'teeter-totter', ramps and a 'barrel mountain'."**

**"The top photo is from around mid-1969. (L to R) Bruce 6B45, Lucky B383 and Sam (Sambo) 5A15 on the top. They were 3 of the 4 Labs the US purchased from the British to create the Combat Tracker Team program in 1967. They formerly served with the SAS hunter-killer teams in Borneo and Malaysia, some of them (Bruce and, I think, Sam) had been wounded during that time. Shadow B387, the fourth Lab, was KIA in late 1968. SGT. Terry Watson, Bryce's handler, is on the ground to the left. This was taken during "play time" as we usually didn't have all teams at the rear at the same time. "**

**"The bottom photo is the "rear" view of this Lab pile...Sam, Lucky and Bruce. "**



## Joe White: The Voice for K9 Veterans Day

By Dixie Whitman

*One of our volunteers mentioned K9 Veterans Day to me recently and as I was sharing some of MWD TSA's history with her, I thought this might be interesting to our Kennel Talk readers, as well.*

Establishing March 13th as K9 Veterans Day is a day whose time has come. Good ideas, like a day to honor the work ethic of our military dogs, should be put into place. The first person who seems to have expressed the concept in writing was Joe White, author of Ebony and White, a book about his time serving in the 47th Infantry Platoon Scout Dog (IPSD) alongside Ebony, a solid black German shepherd.

My very first connection with Military Working Dogs was through Joe White's book. Because we had just added a solid black German shepherd to our family, one of my doggy friends bought the book for me as a Christmas gift. I must admit, that while I would not recommend the book as reading material, the truth that revealed itself, through all of undisciplined writing and lackadaisical editing found in Ebony and White, is that these scout dogs were gifted, treasured partners to the infantry men they supported. Little did I realize while reading that book that some of the people associated with the book would become so important in my life.

Over the course of time, as I became more than just an interested German shepherd enthusiast, I volunteered to assist with a war dog reunion that would be taking place at Fort Benning in May of 2002. As I ultimately put the pieces together, I realized that the very unit that I had volunteered to assist was the 47th

IPSD, the same infantry platoon to which Joe White belonged. Some of the names I was hearing bantered around were the same names I recognized from the book I had read maybe ten years earlier.

As reunion time approached, and more and more veterans were RSVPing their attendance, I was delighted to find that at least two of Ebony's former handlers were going to attend. One of them was Joe White. Joe, it turns out, had devoted much of his life to honoring his Vietnam partner, Ebony, and was proposing that there be a national holiday established to honor and recognize the service and sacrifices of America's Military Working Dogs. I am grateful that I had a few moments to talk with Joe and learn that the passion that he had to remember and honor all of the dogs was still burning.

As I mentioned, the members of the 47th IPSD have become very important to me and we currently have one of them, Jonathan Wahl, serving on our MWD TSA Board of Directors. Jonathan also maintains a website for his unit. Much more information and first-hand accounts of working with dogs in Vietnam can be found at the website's "Platoon Diary" such as this entry:

[www.47ipds.us/47diary3.htm](http://www.47ipds.us/47diary3.htm)

Several states have signed proclamations which recognize March 13th, the birthday of the United

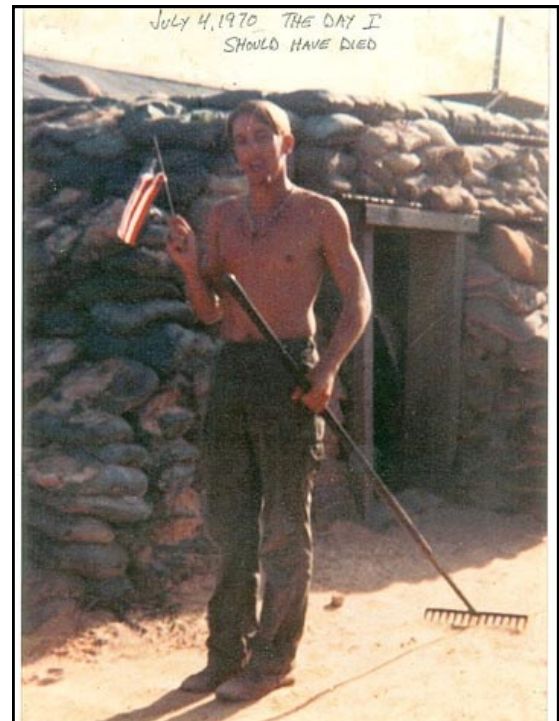


**Courtesy of the 47th IPSD website.**

**Above Left: Front cover of *Ebony and White*, no longer in print.**

**Right: *Ebony*.**

**Below: *Joe White in Vietnam***





K9 Veterans Day continued from page 6

States K9 Corps, as K9 Veterans Day. As Americans, we can do better for our K9 Veterans. Sadly, Joe White passed away before his vision could become a reality, however, that does not lessen its importance. Please, join me in sending a letter to your Congressmen and Senators to request that a national day to honor military K9s be created.

**Below: The first event I volunteered to assist was the 47<sup>th</sup> reunion. Joe White, in the blue shirt with palm trees, was photographed as he made his way up to the memorial to get a close up view after the dedication.**



**Left: Members of the 47th IPSD in attendance at the 2002 IPSD Reunion and War Dog memorial Pedestal Dedication. Joe is in the back row on the far left.**



**Photos above courtesy Dixie Whitman**

## Marietta Diner Meet Up

By Dixie Whitman

When you are an organization spread far and wide, with Board of Directors and Volunteers from Southern Florida to Tacoma, Washington – from Southern California to Vermont and many places in between, you have to take advantage of moments to connect in person.

Three members did just that on Sunday, March 9, 2014 with a quick breakfast at the Marietta Diner in Marietta, Georgia. Volunteer, Nikki Rohrig, Treasurer, Pamela Kendrick and President, Dixie Whitman met for a couple of hours to introduce themselves and discuss various MWD TSA projects.

While passing along one of our MWD TSA banners to Nikki, we thought it would be fun to take a couple of photos and share with everyone.

MWD TSA thanks Pamela Kendrick (left) and Nikki Rohrig (right) for all of their hard work on behalf of MWD TSA and in support of our dog teams.



## New Pet Store Partners with MWD TSA

By Dixie Whitman

We are very proud of our family of supporting pet stores. They are like stars shining brightly across the country.

Without their continued support and generosity, MWD TSA would be unable to offer the level of support that we offer. Joining this

small group of super partners is a new store: Unleashed by Petco in Marietta, Georgia. Please enjoy these photos that were taken at the Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting on March 15th.



**Left: Store employees, Lorenzo and Iesha, make doggy goodie bags for the event.**

**Right: Laryn and Tim pose by the register before their first sale of the day.**

**Below: The store manager, Tim, flanked by his employees cut the ribbon on the morning of the Grand Opening.**



**Below: Team MWD TSA, Tim and Irene, hold up our banner.**



**Right: Tim hands off a donation check to our treasurer, Pamela. The funds will be used immediately in support of our Gone Fishin' boxes.**





# Thoughts on Houma, Louisiana's War Dog Memorial

By Eddie Caido and Diane Baker



*Diane Baker saw a need and she filled it. When you hear the first hand stories from the hearts of Vietnam Dog Handlers, you begin to glimpse what they lost. We'll never fully understand, but we can help honor and respect their service. Shown are two photos taken at the Louisiana War Dog Memorial, dedicated last November in Houma, and the thoughts behind the depiction and the creative process. Diane was the visionary; Eddie was a dog handler whose words have been translated into statues.*

*Eddie describes the memorial through his photos:*

I shot (photos from) a lot of different angles and perspectives. I also moved in on detail and craftsmanship as many Marines, Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen had their input taken into consideration by Ms. Diane Baker, our patron Saint of this memorial, in Houma, Louisiana.

The "My Heart's Desire" pet adoption agency is co-located on the memorial property

owned by Ms. Baker. Ms. Baker received no funding from the State of Louisiana for her project and went full construction after researching what happened to the dogs of Vietnam.

The design of the handler was suggested by many handlers, but Ms. Baker chose the combat oriented handler for his glance, the dog's stare and all the trappings of an Infantryman on patrol. The dog tags can almost be read with one in his boot laces and the other hanging from his neck. The ever-present green towel wrapped around the handler's neck kept the sun off his neck and the sweat from pouring down his back. The handler would wipe his face with the towel and his eyes would sting from the amount of salt absorbed by the towel. It was his pillow at night and his face cloth in the day.

The two other dogs represent various breeds of K9s that once populated our ranks. These breeds allowed us handlers to be their friends, not the other way around. They picked us, they trusted us and somehow, we let them down, we abandoned them but they will never be forgotten.

The "WE" is not you or I, but rather a complicated set of circumstance that would not allow over 4,000 dogs to be repatriated back to the USA. They fought for this country, for the handlers that they protected and the thousands of military personnel who are alive today because of their perseverance and acute K9 capabilities.

The dog bears the tattoo in his ear, coveted by the enemy as a war

trophy and lucrative war booty with a bounty of \$10,000 piasters. Only Snipers and War Dog Handlers had bounties on their heads because their war craft meant death to the enemy ranks.

This dog bears the tattoo of Marine Corps Scout Dog "Chipper." It's his number but all dogs had numbers. Some were lucky and others, less fortunate in their fate. We remember the fallen with the statue of the howling dog mourning the loss of his handler; his howls resonating across the fields of battle and into the conscience of every handler who has had to mourn the loss of a friend or his dog.

The loss is equally felt between a handler and his dog. War forges a kinship and a story that must be told. Diane Baker has given the War Dog Handlers a place to pay tribute to the fallen, to remember their dogs and to hopefully find closure because we will never see our magnificent dogs again.



## Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

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### From the Archives



*The most famous (and unofficial) American War Dog from WWI was a mixed breed, who became the most decorated canine from that conflict. In 1917, Sgt. Stubby was adopted by 102nd Infantry Division as they drilled on the Yale campus. When the 102nd deployed to France, Sgt. Stubby was smuggled along with them as an unofficial mascot.*

*Sgt. Stubby spent 18 months in France, participating in 17 battles, surviving multiple gas attacks and a shrapnel wound from a German grenade. He saved many lives by raising the alarm at the first whiff of poison gas in pre-dawn attacks.*

*Sgt. Stubby also went on patrol with the soldiers, becoming an expert in finding wounded soldiers and, once, discovering a spy mapping the American's positions.*

*Photos courtesy of the National Archives.*