
August 2014
Award Winning
Monthly Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue 8

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MWDTSa touches the lives of dogs and people near and far. This month, our Kennel Talk reports stretch from Afghanistan to New York, Georgia, West Virginia, Michigan, and California, while our archival hero won her fame in WWII New Guinea

Subscribe to see where we connect next month!

Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

MWDTSa KENNEL TALK



U.S. Army PFC Alex Fanning, 98th Medical Detachment Combat Stress Control behavioral health specialist, and MAJ Eden, 98th Medical Detachment CSC combat stress dog, visit service members at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Jan. 21, 2014. Fanning and Eden travel around Bagram and other Forward Operating Bases telling deployed service members who they are, what the 98th Medical Detachment CSC does and what they can do for them.

Major Eden Brings Major Joy To Service Members

Story and photos by Senior Airman Kayla Newman

AFGHANISTAN - Regardless of the branch of service an individual belongs to, deployments can be challenging for everyone.

When being away from home and the stress of being in a deployed location begins to be too much, there is a furry, four-legged energetic red Labrador retriever traveling around Afghanistan, ready to help service members.

U.S. Army MAJ Eden, 98th Medical Detachment Combat Stress Control combat stress

dog, and her handler, PFC Alex Fanning, 98th Medical Detachment CSC behavioral health specialist, visit different units and forward operating bases in Afghanistan to not only build morale, but to help service members through their combat stress.

"Our job is to travel around Bagram and to other FOBs where the 98th is," explained Fanning, deployed from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., and a native of Hueytown, Ala. "We tell people who we are, what we do

MAJor Eden continued on page 2

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and what we can do for them. At the same time we let them play with Eden, which brings people to us instead of me just going to them."

According to Staff Sgt. Thomas Hewett, 98th Medical Detachment CSC noncommissioned officer in charge of warrior recovery center, Eden provides an "in-road" with clients and helps open the door for combat stress personnel.

"Eden is here to help clients relax when they're engaged and talking about the problems they may be facing," explained Hewett.

While Eden helps clients relax and open up, she also builds the morale of the service members that she encounters.

"I have talked with generals and colonels that are just so on board with the program and they think it's a wonderful thing," said Fanning. "They see the difference we make in their soldiers and how happy it makes them; they always want us to come out with Eden and help boost the morale of the soldiers."

Eden, however, was not always on the path to become a combat stress dog.

"Eden is an AMK-9 dog and she originally was training to become a narcotics dog," explained Fanning. "She ended up failing out of the program because she was too hyper and loving."

With Eden's temperament, the American K-9 Detection Services knew she would be perfect for something like helping soldiers with combat stress. Eden will,

however, return to AMK-9 once the 98th Medical Detachment leaves Bagram.

Fanning and Eden have been a team since December 2013, and have been able to see the impact Eden has on soldiers, airmen, sailors and Marines.

"Everywhere we go I can tell she makes people happy," said Fanning. "I have actually seen people cry tears of joy from seeing Eden and playing with her."

Fanning explained how he has seen a service member lie down with Eden and just cuddled her and cried.

"I've had people say they are having the worst day they've ever had and then they see Eden and it makes all the difference," said Fanning.

While Eden is making an impact on deployed service members, she is making an impact on Fanning as well.

"I'll miss her and all the times we spent together. It's been really memorable when we travel together, because it is just me and her flying on helicopters and airplanes," said Fanning. "I'll miss the little moments when we are flying on a helicopter and she's lying down at my feet, looking up at me as we fly over Afghanistan."

Although Eden is currently with the Army, she and Fanning work hand in hand with the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing Combat Stress Control. The two units conduct walk-arounds together informing service members that they can get help with stress through either the Army or Air Force.

So whether a deployed service member is at Bagram or another FOB where the 98th Medical Detachment is located, Eden and her combat control stress team are available and willing to help.

MAJor Eden continued from page 1



Top Left: U.S. Army MAJ Eden, 98th Medical Detachment Combat Stress Control combat stress dog, is the only commissioned MWD.

Above: MAJ Eden, 98th Medical Detachment Combat Stress Control combat stress dog, plays with a Department of Agriculture employee at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Jan. 21, 2014. Eden, a red Labrador Retriever, provides an "in-road" with clients and helps open the door for combat stress personnel.

Below: U.S. Army PFC Alex Fanning, 98th Medical Detachment Combat Stress Control behavioral health specialist, walks with MAJ Eden, 98th Medical Detachment CSC combat stress dog at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Jan. 21, 2014. Fanning and Eden travel around Bagram and other Forward Operating Base's telling deployed Service members who they are, what the 98th Medical Detachment CSC does and what they can do for them.



NASCAR Care Package Event

Right: Most of the volunteer packing crew.

70 care packages were taken to the post office on Saturday, July 19th. The remainder were shipped on Monday, July 21st.

Below: These photos show just some of the care packages making their way through the mailing process. 70 boxes make a huge stack.



The third quarter care packing event was held July 19th and was hosted by MWDTSA President, Dixie Whitman, in north Georgia. A total of 20 volunteers gathered early on Saturday morning to get the packing party started. Nikki Rohrig, who volunteers with MWDTSA in many capacities, drove all of the way from Abingdon, VA to attend the event and get some first-hand packing experience under her belt.

We send a huge thank you to the Tony Stewart Foundation for all of the great donations – hats, T shirts, dog tug toys and more! #14 will always hold a very special place in the heart of MWDTSA. One of our very important volunteers from California, Jan Slotar, crafted checkered flag bandanas for the dogs to wear. We also had great support from many other donors- please check out our donor list!

It didn't take long to get a rhythm set up; each time a packing is done, it requires a little bit different technique and style due to the contents of the boxes. This time around we celebrated NASCAR and with that as our theme, the donations started pouring in!

Everyone seemed to have a great time packing and afterwards we gathered for a BBQ luncheon. Please enjoy these photos from the event and a very sincere thank you to all who donated and worked hard to make sure these boxes were filled with donations and support for our great dog teams.



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NASCAR Care Package Event continued from page 3

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:

Animal Hospital of Thousand Oaks, Thousand Oaks, Calif.

Dr. Elizabeth Barr

Dick Baumer

BumbleBar, Inc., Spokane Valley, Wash.

Delca Corp., Laguna Niguel, Calif.

D.O.G. Bakery, Traverse City, Mich.

Gold Bond Team | Chattem Inc., Chattanooga, Tenn.

Invisible Fence by Peachtree, Woodstock, Ga.

Robin Komoto

Lucky Duck Pet Stuff, Chesapeake Beach, Md.

Ivy Magas

Matthew's Missions - Church of the Transfiguration

and St. Stanislaus Kostka R. C. Church, Maspeth, N.Y.

National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C.

OPI Products Inc., North Hollywood, Calif

Julie Pick and family

Ryan Prociuk

Stephen Redding

CW5 Roof, members of 3D MP Group (CID) and attendees of his retirement luncheon, Savannah, Ga.

Kristen San Antonio

Courtney Slotar

Jan Slotar

Jodi Slotar

Street & Smith's Sports Group, Charlotte, N.C.

Stur Drinks, Jersey City, N.J.

THANASI Foods LLC, Boulder, Colo.

The Tony Stewart Foundation, Indianapolis, Ind.

TurboPUP, La Pine, Ore.

Top Dogs, Kennesaw and Roswell, Ga.

VT Militaria

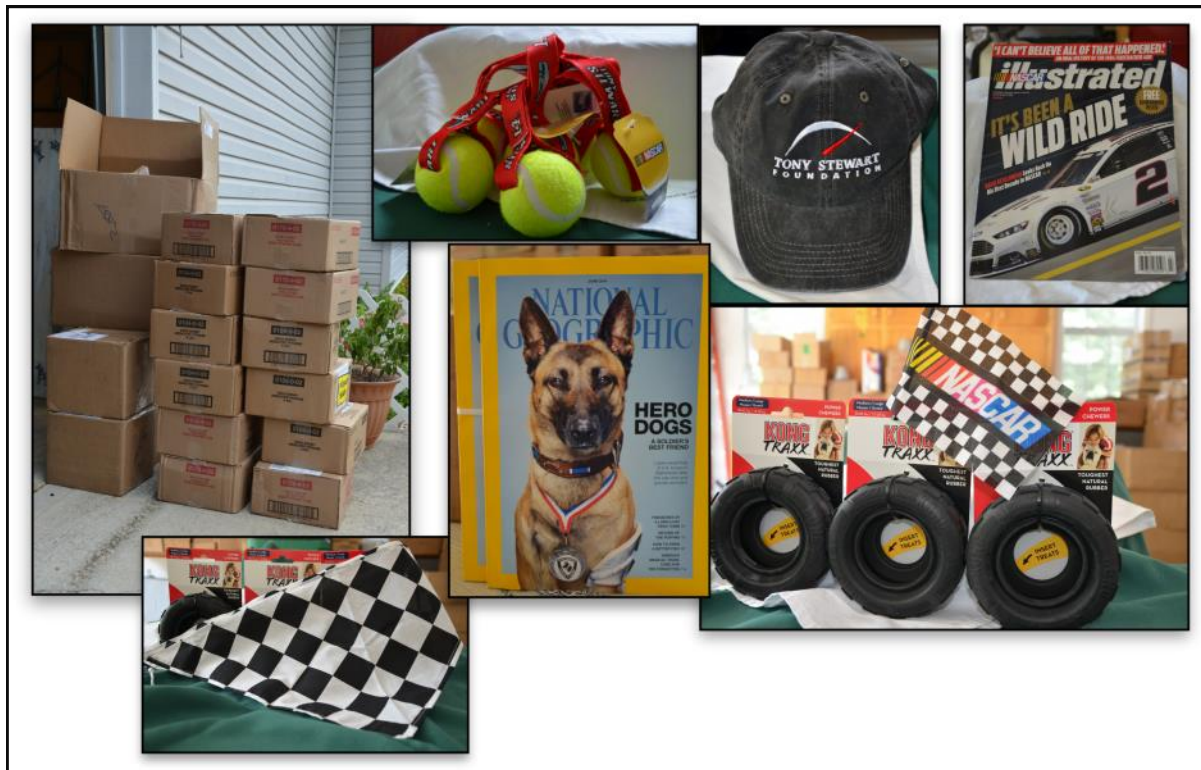
Kathie Woodring



Included in the NASCAR themed care packages were: (Right from Top) Bumble Bars; TurboPup; Stur water enhancers; Gold Bond Medicated Foot and Body Powder; Beef flavored car cookies custom designed, baked and donated by D.O.G. Bakery; Crunchy Puffs—Alaskan White Fish; Earth Bath Pet Wipes donated by Nosework Trial; Scott's BBQ Sauce.

NASCAR Care Package Event continued on page 5

NASCAR Care Package Event continued from page 4



Above: Top Left: In the days and weeks before the NASCAR Packing Event, stacks of boxes filled with items for the care packages were delivered to Dixie Whitman's house. Included in the care packages were (from Top): Tony Stewart Foundation dog toys; Tony Stewart Foundation hats; NASCAR Illustrated magazines; National Geographic Magazines—copies of the June issue, featuring War Dogs were donated by National Geographic; KONG Traxx, donated by Animal Hospital of Thousand Oaks, and by Matthew's Missions; NASCAR flags, donated by Dick Baumer; and checkered flag bandanas donated and made by Jan Slotar, Jodi Slotar and Courtney Slotar.

Support from 3D MP Group (CID)

On July 8th, CW5 Kevin R. Roof retired after serving for 32 years in the US Army. He retired from 3D MP Group (CID) at Hunter Army Air Field, Savannah GA. He had requested that a collection for a donation to an animal related charity be taken at his retirement luncheon and award ceremony in lieu of a plaque.

Ms B. Mills, the commanding Colonel's secretary chose MWD TSA as the recipient charity, organizing suitable posters describing MWD TSA's mission, and the giant check pictured. MWD TSA VP Avril Roy-Smith was invited to the occasion to outline our history and mission.

A collection was taken at the event. Further donations were received over the course of the following week, with a total of over \$200 being raised to help in the postage costs incurred mailing the 3rd quarter care packages.

Right: HHD Company Commander, CPT L. Brooks and Ms. B. Mills display a check for the amount raised at the retirement luncheon.



Combat Tracker Team Reunion

by COL Dick Baumer, USA (Ret.)



Above: Some of the attendees pose for a unit picture - 23rd Infantry Division Combat Trackers.

Front Row (L to R): John Ferguson, Quang Nguyen (Kit Carson Scout), Bobby Hughes, Rodney Patterson.
Standing (L to R): Bruce Hundley, Grady Brown, Richard Myers, Bob Konarske (reunion host).



Above: Enjoying dinner at the Moose Lodge overlooking the Kanawha River.

Front (L to R): Frank Merritt, Dick Baumer, Sue Merritt.
Back (L to R): CSM Kay Mills, Alvin Rose.



Above: Reunion dinner at the Moose Lodge. (L to R) James Chaney (seated) Don Campbell and John Carroll.

Below: Volunteer (and now first year Veterinary student) Courtney Griffin displays one of the shirts distributed at the reunion.



Combat Tracker Teams of the Vietnam War convened in Charleston, West Virginia, during June for a memorable 15th annual reunion. The event was hosted by Bob Konarske and his family and was attended by 44 former Combat Trackers and their families who gathered for a weekend of reminiscences, war stories and fellowship.

Although it was a small gathering, when you consider there were fewer than 500 Combat Trackers during 1967 to 1972, that's a pretty impressive turn-out. Combat Trackers operated in five man teams with a Labrador tracking dog, and their mission was to establish or re-establish contact. The American CTT was modeled on British SAS Hunter Killer teams employed similarly in Borneo and Malaysia in the early 1960s.

The tracker attendees all received

commemorative T-shirts donated by the MWDTSA. Dixie Whitman MWDTSA President and her husband Jerry were on hand to hand out the shirts. Dixie also distributed small posters of two **generations** of Combat Trackers featuring four current USMC Trackers. All of the attendees signed the back of these and the posters were recently sent to the Marines.

Sue Merritt, CTT "webmistress" was also on hand to sign copies of her book, *Seek On!*, about the origins and training of the combat trackers in Vietnam. Sue and her husband, Frank Merritt, have been the "glue" that made all of these reunions possible. Trackers attending came from as far away as Florida, Louisiana, Michigan, Georgia, Texas and California.

Attendees enjoyed site-seeing in Charleston and the surrounding

Combat Trackers continued from page 6

area, some even drifting south to visit a coal mine museum with its train trip through a mountain. Saturday night we gathered for dinner at Moose Lodge 1444 in Charleston. The lodge is located high on the banks of the Kanawha River, a perfect setting for a great roast beef dinner. Sue Merritt read the roll-call of fallen trackers and dogs as well as recently passed tracker veterans.

Afterward, SGM Chuck Steward, our ace "auctioneer" skillfully extracted lots of money from bidders on items ranging from hand made oak jewelry boxes, carved CIBs, and Indian Code-talker books and medals to a fabulous museum quality CTT quilt created by Tom Auer's wife, Yvonne. All of the auction proceeds are earmarked to maintain the CTT website (www.combattrackerteam.org).

Not to be outdone, SGM Don Campbell announced that the Combat Tracker Scholarship had recently awarded \$1,000 to a de-

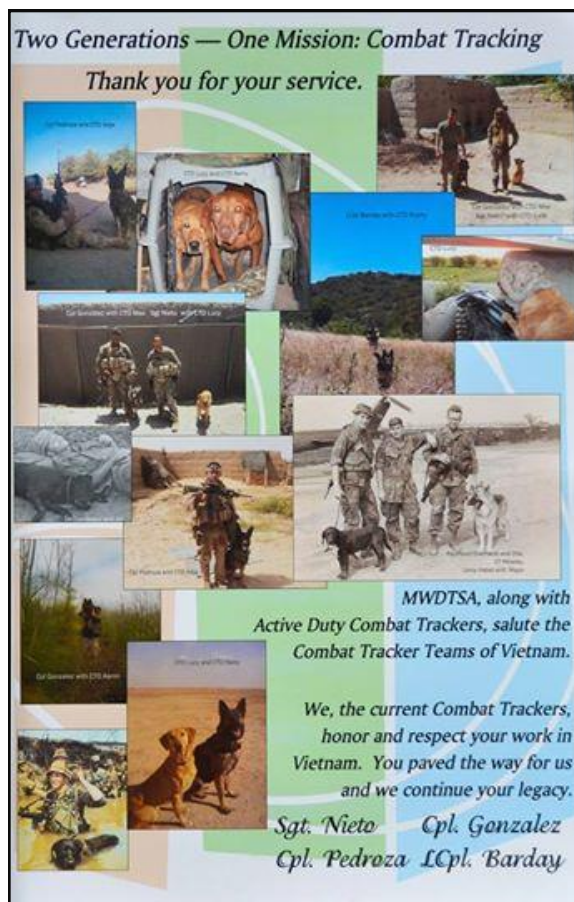
serving college-bound OAF veteran. He then passed the hat and collected over \$1,400 to add to the scholarship account. To help defray the weekend's expenses, Alvin Rose, a former 1st Cav Tracker, distributed free scratch-off lottery tickets. Rose, is a Deputy Director of the West Virginia Lottery.

In a first for the CTT reunions, held annually since 1999, Quang Nguyen, a former Kit Carson Scout with the Trackers of the 23rd Infantry Division (Americal), flew in from Boston to attend for the first time. Quang had been in POW and "re-education" camps for many years and was finally able to immigrate to the U.S. in 1991. He was moved to attend thanks to the efforts of Bob Hughes, one of his former tracker platoon members, who had earlier sent him a photo album of team pictures to replace all of his documents he had to destroy when he was captured by the NVA.

Below: Tom Auer and his wife Yvonne display the hand-made quilt she created for the reunion auction.



Above: SGT Octavio Gonzales, a Combat Tracker instructor at Lackland AFB, with his signed CTT poster.
Below: The CIT poster.



Matthew's Missions in Maspeth, NY Supports with Funding and Kids' Creations

by Dixie Whitman



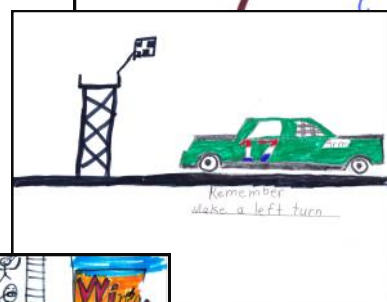
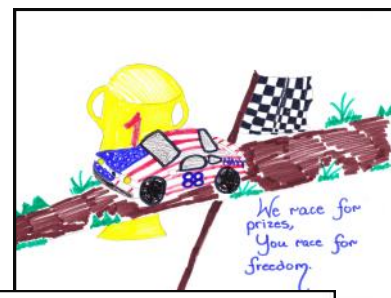
Left: Some of the Matthew's Mission donors.

Mary Todzia of Transfiguration and St. Stanislaus Kostka parish in Maspeth, NY reached out to MWDTSA in early April, advising that their church group was interested in partnering with us for the next round of care packages. Matthew's Mission with Mary as its leader, seeks opportunities to share good deeds and actions. Like the legend of the mustard seed, the group takes small beginnings and makes something much larger out of it. Their original goal was to do a fundraiser over the Memorial Day weekend; I mentioned to Mary that artwork and letters from children would also be welcomed.

True to their roots, Matthew's Mission started with a small request and it simply grew as people were generous with their donations. MWDTSA is delighted to announce that these wonderful people sup-

ported our 3rd quarter NASCAR themed boxes with a donation of \$1000 in funding and a wonderful array of drawings and letters to the dog handlers. After looking at some of the amazingly colorful artwork that their students created, I'm sure you will agree that our theme truly inspired them.

Please join me in thanking Mary and all of the members of the Matthew's Missions group, with a huge thank you sent to the young artists and writers who helped us with drawings or letters. This reminds me of the stone thrown into a lake, whose ripples undulate outward to unknown places, reaching shores far from the original entry point of the rock. Your kindness touches us and I know it will be appreciated by the handlers as they open their boxes. Thank you.



Above and Right: Some examples of the NASCAR themed artwork produced by the young artists from Matthew's Mission.



Flag Day at Hope Village

by Allison Merrill and Avril Roy-Smith



Saturday, June 14th, 2014 was Flag Day. MWD TSA Board of Directors member, Allison Merrill, took her dogs, Zen and Zion, to Hope Village Senior Living Community in Traverse City, Michigan, to do a special Flag Day presentation. The residents who attended all wore red, white and blue to celebrate the day.



Allison explained the role of Military Working Dogs in the modern military and went on to discuss what MWD TSA does to support the MWDs and their handlers. The attendees wrote notes of thanks and encouragement to the handlers on Flag Paper. These notes were included in the third quarter care packages. Some of the assisted living residents who were not able to take part in the presentation contributed to the effort by stamping Flag Cards or writing a few words.

A group photo was taken which was included in the care packages.

The Flag Day event was sponsored by Sun Dog Kennel and Northern Michigan Veterinary Hospital, both of Traverse City, Mich. John A Gessner Photography donated the time to take the photographs.



American Heroes Air Show



by Jan Slotar



Above Left: MWDTSA booth at the American Heroes Air Show held at Hansen Dam Recreation Area.

Above: A sample care package shows the kind of items sent to MWDs and their handlers.

On a very warm Saturday, June 21, 2014, MWDTSA manned a booth at the American Heroes Air Show at Hansen Dam Recreation Area, in Lake View Terrace, Calif. The Air Show is an admission free, helicopter only, air show that has been held annually at Hansen Dam since it was established as a non-profit event in 1992.

MWDTSA was on hand to get the word out about our great Military Working Dogs and their Handlers. Most of the visitors who stopped by our booth had no idea what a Military Working Dog was, much less what they did.

So, they checked out our display poster, "What Are Military Working Dogs?", the 45 page photo essay book (put together by 2nd VP Dick Baumer), and our 2014 Calendar. Also on display was a sample care package that I put together. Visitors were able to actually see some of the items that we send to the MWD Teams, such as Kong toys, dog dental kits (people were amazed we sent these), bandanas, and treats for the dogs, personal care items, magazines, powdered drink mixes, and snacks for the handlers. We also handed out brochures, pens, and copies of Kennel Talk, our fantastic monthly newsletter.

We did have several people stop by who were familiar with Military Working Dogs. LAPD, ATF, and U.S. Secret Service stopped by to donate and to thank MWDTSA for everything we do. We also had Vietnam Vets stop by, one of whom had been a Dog Handler, partnered with a Tunnel Dog in Vietnam. Their missions were to locate and search the underground tunnels where Viet Cong guerillas hid, and also where their supplies and weapons were cached.

The MWDTSA booth was a great success. I would like to thank everyone who stopped by our booth to learn about the MWD Teams, ask questions about the handlers and the dogs, visit, sign up for Kennel Talk, and donate. We appreciate your efforts in supporting "both ends of the leash".

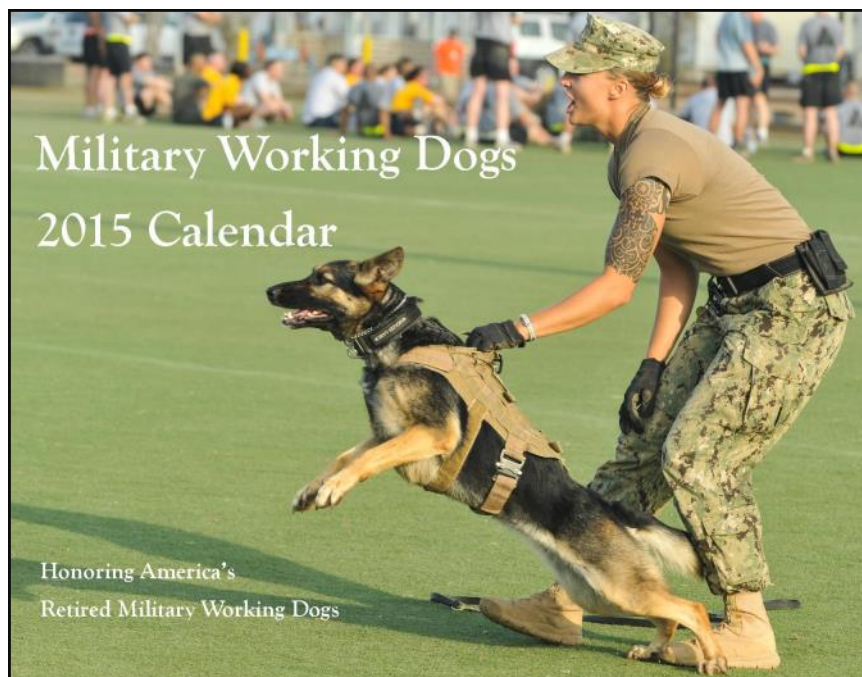
I would also like to thank our volunteers for their help during the day – Dr. Elizabeth Barr, Animal Hospital of Thousand Oaks, from Santa Rosa Valley 4-H, Monika & Scarlett James, Tiffani & Grace Van Splinter, Karen, Kristen, Garrett & Robert McEachron, new MWDTSA volunteers Serena Bordofsky, Celeste Bocian, Ben Shaw US Navy, Elena Ortega & niece Breana, Maria Marquez, and Diana Marchesan.



Above: Monika James, on left, uses the poster and photo essay book to explain MWDs to a Scout Troop, while Breana Ortega looks on.



2015 MWDTSA Calendar Honors Retired Military Working Dogs



Above: Front Cover—Navy handler, Ashly Lester, and her partner, Leska, train to keep proficiency up on subduing suspects. Ashly and Leska were supported by MWDTSA on a former deployment.

Below: Back Cover—Retired Air Force dog, Tomy, enjoys traveling with his former handler and best buddy, Mary Boyer. Tomy and Mary were supported by MWDTSA on a former deployment and we are delighted to see great photos of Tomy enjoying his retirement.

MWDTSA's third calendar again features stunning photos of military working dogs at work, at rest and at play. In a nod to our theme, one of the photos features Miss Arka at her retirement ceremony. With each month, we have also included a candid insert photo (or two or three) of retired military working dogs taken by their adoptive partners. In these candid photos you will see the true love and devotion from both ends of the leash.

In order to avoid disappointing supporters, we are offering a short pre-order opportunity to ensure that you are able to get all of the calendars that you'd like to order. That way, we can ensure that we order enough to cover all of the folks who would like to place an order.

Pre-ordering will be available beginning on August 1st and will continue through August 15th.

The pre-order price of the calendar will be \$15 even, which will include shipping and handling. Please order your calendar today at our website. They make great gifts and should be out by early September for anybody who has pre-ordered.



Sit. Stay. Support.

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Kennel Talk is the proud recipient of a GSDCA Special
Newsletter Award!

From the Archives

The world's first therapy dog on record, Smoky was a miniature Yorkshire Terrier who was found in an abandoned fox-hole. Originally purchased in Brisbane, Australia by a US nurse stationed in New Guinea, she was discovered by US soldiers in the jungle during World War II.

Eventually, Smoky was acquired by Corporal William Wynne. Accompanying him, Smoky was credited with twelve combat missions, surviving 150 air raids in New Guinea and a typhoon in Okinawa.

While not an 'official' war dog, she helped engineers build an airbase in Luzon. The Signal Corp needed to run a telegraph wire through a 70 foot pipe that was only 8 inches in diameter. Portions of the pipe were clogged with soil, but Smoky crawled through the pipe, pulling the wire with her. Her actions meant that the taxiway did not have to be dug up, interrupting the fighter and reconnaissance flights flying from the airbase.

Smoky's therapy dog service began in June 1944 at the 233rd Station Hospital in New Guinea. Dr. Charles Mayo, of the Mayo Clinic, was the commanding officer who gave permission to go on rounds.

Although she died in February, 1957, at an estimated 14 years old, she is still being honored, most recently in June, 2012 at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital in Brisbane, for her work as a therapy dog during World War II and afterwards in Australian Hospitals.

Photos: National Archives.

