

May 2014
Award Winning
Monthly Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue 5

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Inside this issue:

Virtual World Tour	1
(Wo)man's Best Friend	4
NAS Lemoore Visit	6
One Piece at a Time	7
MWDTSA Volunteers And Supporters	8
Welcome Wagon Committee	9
From the Archives	10

What skills can you share
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teers in:

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Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

MWDTSA KENNEL TALK



From the Chievres Garrison: Three dog teams are photographed with their new MWDTSA shirts and KONG toys. SSG Steve Staples and Rex, SGT Brian Pate and Dino, SPC Jacob Rodriguez and Varato. Photos courtesy of Jessica Pate.

Virtual World Tour Starts in Belgium

By Jessica Pate and Dixie Whitman

MWDTSA's missions in 2014 include reaching out to bases where we would not physically be able to visit. We want to bring to those kennels a sense of an MWDTSA in-person visit, complete with T Shirts, dog toys, food and recognition for a job well done. Our first stop: Chievres Kennel near Mons, Belgium.

Our first Virtual World Tour visit was in Chievres, Belgium. There are few facilities on Chievres, one of which is the Military Working Dog kennels. Chievres is a base that is associated with and supports Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), which is a NATO base. The mission and vision state-

ment are for the Benelux area (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxemburg).

The Chievres Mission: *"Our mission is to provide Base Operations to joint military, civilians and their families, to include interagency community members with a quality of life equal to*

Virtual World Tour continued page 2

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Virtual World Tour continued from page 1

the quality of their service."

The Chievres Vision: *"Provide consistent, quality services that serve as a force multiplier for supported organizations and materially enhance U.S. community and family well-being and readiness, while contributing to the reputation of the U.S. as a valued partner within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization."*

The airfield at Chievres has a long and storied history. It was first established by Germans during World War I as a grassy airfield to support German missions. After WWI, the Belgian Military planned to build a real airstrip; however, they were interrupted again by Nazi Germany in 1940. As the Germans were invading Western Europe, they rebuilt the airfield.

At first, the airfield was used by the Italian Air Force, which participated in several raids over England. By early 1941, the Italians had returned to Italy and the base was being used by the German Luftwaffe bomber units to attack England.

A little more than a week after D Day, the Chievres-based German aircraft bombed the beaches of Normandy. It was too late. By September 1, 1944, five years after Germany invaded Poland, and less than three months after the Americans were inserted into France on the wide beaches of Normandy, the Germans were removed from Chievres.

During WWII, the Chievres airfield was bombed over 30 times before it was retaken from the Germans by the Allied Forces in October of 1944 and, from there, the Allied aircraft supported the Ardennes offensive and the Battle of the Bulge in December of that same year.

Since 1968 the Chievres Air Base has been supporting the NATO/SHAPE missions. It is known as the Chievres Garrison.

Our goal was to send support to the teams at the Chievres Kennel who are serving US missions abroad. In doing so, we attempted to support them in the same fashion as we do stateside kennels where we might visit in person. Fortunately, we worked with a great handler, Sgt. Brian Pate, who MWD TSA first met on an in person visit to Fort Hood Kennels back in 2010.

The day was complete with special MWD TSA T shirts for all of the handlers, a new KONG toy for all of the dogs, and a luncheon of pizza from Anthony's Pizza. We even got a virtual demonstration by the staff. Thanks to all of these great teams for participating.

A special thanks to MWD TSA Volunteer, Jessica Pate, for taking and sharing such great photos of the day. Please enjoy watching these great dog teams at work.



Dino demonstrates the hold bite on the sleeve of SPC Rodriguez (above) and SSG Staples (below), while handler, SGT Pate, encourages his dog. Dogs train daily to perfect their skills in patrol work, which includes the bite hold.



Virtual World Tour continued page 3

Virtual World Tour continued from page 2



Above: SSG Staples runs his MWD, Rex, through the obstacle course, which includes a hurdle, stairs and an A frame. Obstacle course skills are important for the dog to be comfortable while apprehending a suspect through varied structures and terrains.

Top Left: Rex awaits the OK from his handler before receiving his KONG. Play time with a favorite KONG toy is a common reward for hard work.

Below: Jessica Pate and SSG Staples pose for a photograph. Jessica coordinated the Chievres visit as part of MWD TSA's Virtual World Tour, which also included a pizza luncheon, enjoyed by the kennel staff.



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Women's History Month: Kennel Master Shares Joys of (Wo)man's Best Friend

Story and Photos by Karen Abeyasekera,
100th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

3/18/2014 - RAF MILDENHALL, England -- Combining her love of dogs and being in the U.S. Air Force, Tech. Sgt. Hannah Hobart, 100th Security Forces Squadron Military Working Dog kennel master, is pretty much in her element.

"I signed up to be a cop, although I wasn't a handler at first," said Hobart. "Once I started working as a security forces member and saw the capabilities of the dogs, I then pursued it and upgraded to the proper skill level."

The additional 12 weeks of training is to become an MWD handler takes place at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio.

"Before I went to school, I didn't know how awesome it was to work with a dog rather than a human," said the Aurora, Ind., native. "It's definitely a lot more interesting! They're incredible; the dogs are your best friend at work, your partner, and they've got your back all the time."

Hobart has a natural affinity with dogs, according to her coworkers, which makes her an ideal handler and kennel master. She's responsible for eight dogs - six German Shepherds and two Belgian Malinois - and their handlers.

"They're an asset that's extremely underestimated," she said. "A lot of people don't understand how important the

dogs are when it comes to detection, criminal deterrents on every level; their senses are unmatched and when it comes to humans they can tell you everything, just through their body language.

"You know they are always going to be there for you; there's never a dull moment with the dogs," she continued. "They're the reason I want to come to work every day."

When seeing the kennel master and handlers with their canine partners, there's an obvious bond between them.

"It's built through a lot of rapport; going for walks, feeding and taking care of them in every way, playing fetch and just doing basic obedience with the dogs," Hobart said. "Through those things - before you even start working - you start to build that relationship with each other, and start to build that trust. Once you have that, you can go anywhere."

Just like humans, each dog has its own personality, quirks, likes and dislikes, and there are always dogs that are easier to work with than others.

"When you get paired up with a dog, that rapport time is what allows you to get know how this dog is and how you guys will work together. But sometimes it just doesn't work; personalities either clash or it just doesn't happen."



U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Hannah Hobart, right, 100th Security Forces Squadron Military Working Dog kennel master from Aurora, Ind., goes through troubleshooting procedures with Staff Sgt. Joseph Serrano, 100th SFS MWD handler from Santa Clarita Valley, Calif., during an obedience session with MWD Gandi March 17, 2014, at the MWD facility on RAF Mildenhall, England. This level of control not only makes the dog safer to work on the street, but may well save his life, should he be heading for danger in the line of duty. March is Women's History Month, and Hobart is a great representation of women in the Air Force, according to her supervisor Senior Master Sgt. Mario White, 100th SFS operations superintendent from Prince Frederick, Md. Hobart is the first woman in her family to join the Air Force.

Hobart laughed as she recalled previous dogs she'd known. She explained that some dogs are easier to work with than others, and there are definitely those who, like people, can be extremely high maintenance.

"My favorite dog I've ever worked with is Ajax," Hobart said. Ajax is one of the MWDs assigned to RAF Mildenhall.

"He was so easy to work with; we got along so well and he was such a great worker. Ajax is a beast! He's so good at what he does - he challenged me and I could always do something different with him," the kennel master said. "I could go above and beyond with him."

However, she considers her first MWD, Cora, her joint-favorite.

(Wo)man's Best Friend continued from page 4

"She's the one that challenged me the most, and I learned everything from her. Cora was a challenge every day; there was always something new or different with her," she laughed. "I could always expect something in the form of trouble from her every day! But Cora was the one that taught me the most. She kept me on my toes."

Hobart was paired with Cora, a Belgian Malinois, at her first base, Hurlburt Field, Fla., from 2008 to 2010.

"She was a hot mess, but we were deployed together, and that's what sealed the deal with our bond. We butted heads for the first six months; it's like having an unruly child - once you find that median, you're good.

"It's almost like she had an epiphany one day when we were in Iraq, and she was like, 'Alright, I think we'll be okay. I'll stop making messes for you that you have to clean up for me,'" Hobart said, explaining that Cora was a young, "green" dog and new to the Air Force.

Being a female security forces member in the Air Force, in what is usually considered a male-dominated career field, there are bound to be barriers every now and then along the way.

The kennel master said she has come across that issue several times since joining the Air Force.

"But I never let it get to me. I

knew it was a barrier and it was a challenge, but I never let it be a part of my career. I just did what I was told and met the standard, if not a little bit more.

"I never compared myself to men, because you can't, and I never compared myself to any of the other women either," she laughed. "You just go in and do what you've gotta do, and hey, if people want to put that barrier up for you, go ahead and do it - but I don't recognize being a female as a barrier in this career field. I run with the best of them!"

Whatever the career field, women prove time and time again that they are more than capable of doing the job.

"Women and men can do (this) job equally," Hobart said. "You don't have to be a man to be a kennel master, the same as you don't have to be a woman to be a kennel master. You've just got to know your job and do it. There's only a man/woman restriction when the Air Force says so, like with combat duties. Otherwise, any woman should be able to do any job a man does."

Being in the military is a family tradition for the kennel master, though she is the first woman in her family to join.

"My grandfather was in the Air Force during the Korean War. My other grandfather was Army in World War II. My brother was Army and in Iraqi Freedom when it first kicked off. I wanted to follow in the footsteps of

my brother, but I really did it for the whole family.

"I felt if my brother and my grandparents could do it for our family, then I definitely could too. My mom and dad brought us up to be responsible adults; they set me up for success," she said.

This ownership of responsibility has served Hobart well in her military career, and those above her have noticed.

"Hannah personifies the Air Force Core Values - specifically, 'Excellence in All We Do,'" said her supervisor, Senior Master Sgt. Mario White, 100th SFS operations superintendent from Prince Frederick, Md. "She maintains an exemplary standard of care for all the military working dogs, she mentors and develops her handlers, and ensures the highest standard of daily kennel sanitation and cleanliness. She takes pride in her job performance.

"(Sergeant Hobart) is the nucleus - she brings everyone together," White said. "I observe her interaction with her trainers too; she possesses great 'people skills' and has great attributes - she's an effective listener and a take-charge leader."

Drawing on her own experiences, Hobart offered advice for any young women looking

to either join the military or looking to take on a different career.

"Do it for you. Don't compare yourself to others; do what you want to do and succeed on your own terms. Don't think of it as, 'I'm going into a male-dominated career field and I've got to be like them.' No - you can be your own person without putting up that gender barrier," she said.

Hobart is a great representation of women in the Air Force, according to White.

"She has determination, integrity of the highest level, she's courageous and doesn't 'settle for anything - Hannah is totally driven!" the operations superintendent said.

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Hannah Hobart stands with MWD Gandi as he awaits commands from his handler, Staff Sgt. Joseph Serrano, during an obedience session March 17, 2014, on RAF Mildenhall, England.



NAS Lemoore MWDs and Handlers are STRAC

Story and photos by Dick Baumer

During my active duty days, high praise was to be considered "STRAC." It's an old military acronym meaning: Strategic-Tough-Ready Around the Clock. On March 26, 2014 I visited the kennels of the six Navy Military Working Dogs at NAS Lemoore, Calif. Based on my visit, they are in very good hands as their handlers are indeed STRAC.

Master at Arms 2nd Class Logan Hullum, the Kennel Supervisor, proudly gave me a tour of their facilities, located adjacent to the fairly new Base Security building. They are under the take-off flight path of the resident F/A-18 Super Hornets based there, but the facilities are top notch and kept "ship-shape" by these obviously very professional handlers.

I was able to visit the dogs in their kennels and even watch as MA2 Hullum put MWD Apach through his paces on the facility agility/obstacle course. Hullum explained that they worked the dogs several hours a day even as they maintained their own law enforcement proficiency, performed base and gate patrol duties and put on demonstrations. "We've got a busy schedule coming up, with a demo at Hanford Mall for an Abused Children group next week, then another demo for the "Boots for Breakfast" folks and one for 80 6th grade students on base the following week."

I had a chance to compare training notes with MASN Kruci-

ak about tracking since his was the lone military tracking dog on base, although both he and MA2 Fiscus are working on maintaining Blecky's tracking proficiency. Later, relaxing in their K-9 Detachment offices as I delivered Kongs, coffee, dog treats, MWD TSA T-shirts and snacks, it was clear these young men were very proud of their work, their dogs and their jobs.

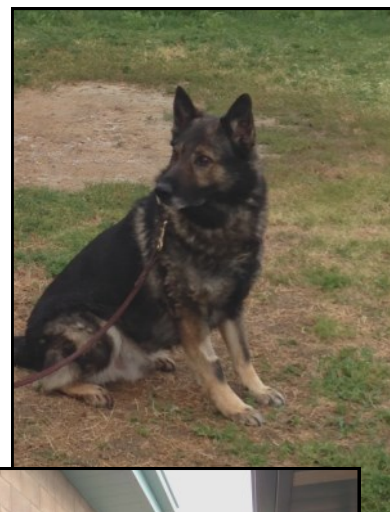
Brutus and I had a great time visiting these guys—he even got a chance to leave a "Kilroy was here" gift on almost every bush outside the Security Office, just to let the working dogs know he'd visited too.

Below: MA2 Fite and MA2 Hullum working Apach .

Below Right: Resident "techie" MA2 Fite demos his new GoPro camera and tablet monitor.

Right: MWD Apach awaits a command.

Below: (L to R) MA2 Fite, MA2 Tew, MASN Kruciak, MA2 Hullum (KS) and MA2 Fiscus (missing OFC Loydan).



One Piece at a Time

by Dixie Whitman

MWD TSA was formed in 2007 to coordinate, channel and encourage support from individuals, organizations and corporations to benefit active duty and retired U.S. military working dogs and dog handlers. MWD TSA brings to their donors a dedicated, innovative and responsive approach by serving as a conduit to direct critical products and services which fulfill real needs of dogs and dog handlers. In most circumstances, our support takes the form of care packages, installation visits or answering requests for specific items from a kennel or command.

In March, we received a request from a retired New Jersey Police Officer/K9 Handler, Ray Benevento. He owned a Ballistic/Stab Threat Armor Vest for a K9 that he wanted to donate to a military dog team. As we worked to find the perfect match for this potentially life-saving vest, we learned a little more about Officer Benevento and his K9 partner, Colt.

Benevento worked in the small Camden County town of Lindenwold, New Jersey, half way between Philadelphia and Atlantic City. There were 2 K9 Units with their local police force, his consisted of himself and his partner, Colt, a 100 pound German shepherd dog born and bred in Czechoslovakia. They trained with the New Jersey Police K9 Association and were actively serving until a work related injury forced Benevento to retire. The Police Department allowed Colt to retire with him.

"During our short time in Lindenwold, Colt successfully led tracks in apprehending suspects in commercial and residential burglaries, armed robberies and car theft. He assisted in covering suspects while two handguns were seized and removed from

the street. His size, discipline and demeanor cleared many drug corners, quieted many crowds, and I think soiled many a pair of jeans!"

"After our work day, I took off his leather work collar and he was off duty. He would curl up next to my wife and fall asleep...usually on my side of the bed. I called him "The Light Switch", when he came to work with me, he was all business, but was playful and bounding around like a puppy catching fireflies when we got home and took off his uniform."

MWD TSA was delighted to hear about the vest and checked with handlers to see who might have an interest and whose dog it would fit. Several handlers were looking at the Facebook post, but the first person to respond with a "Yes, I want it and yes, it will fit my dog." was SSG Josh Knight.

We have heard that the vest has made the journey to SSG Knight. In addition to serving as protection for Knight's Specialized Search Dog (SSD), Bart, a shiny black super sweet Labrador retriever, the vest will also be shared with the other kennel dogs. All dogs that fit the vest and are working patrol may benefit. That is the best and highest usage of this gift that we could make.

MWD TSA thanks Ray Benevento and his partner, Colt, for reaching out to us and allowing us to serve as a channel to find a grateful new home for his generous gift with the dog teams at Fort Belvoir.

Top: Retired New Jersey Police Officer/K9 Handler, Ray Benevento with Colt.

Right: SSG Knight and SSD Bart wearing the donated Ballistic/Stab Threat Armor Vest.



MWD TSA Volunteers and Supporters: Gone Fishin' Care Packages

MWD TSA Volunteer Jan Slotar went to a dog event, "Bark in the Park", in Thousand Oaks, in October of 2013. She wanted to see a Dog CPR demo, given by the Animal Hospital of Thousand Oaks, Calif. Dr. Sharon Bass gave the demo, using a dog CPR manikin. Jan put a face shield around the "dogs" muzzle & tried it out; she could actually see the "lungs" rise & fall.

Jan had her MWD TSA volunteer t-shirt on, & she just started talking about MWD's, their handlers & the next care packages MWD TSA would be sending out for Thanksgiving & Christmas. Dr. Bass introduced Jan to Dr. Elizabeth Barr, owner of AHTO, who said they would be happy to help.

Jan got her email address, sent her an email with a wish list, & she's been helping ever since. The first donations, were for the handlers, subsequent donations since have been for both dogs & handlers. Donations by the AHTO, staff and clients have included: dog toothbrushes and toothpaste, dog treats, snacks, Kong footballs, drink mixes and hygiene and personal care items for the handlers, fleece throws, and many cards of support for the handlers.

Items from the AHTO will be included in the Gone Fishin' themed 2nd Quarter care packages.

Dr. Barr, the Animal Hospital of Thousand Oaks and their wonderful clients, have been generous in their support for the MWD Teams, helping with the Thanksgiving/Christmas care packages, the Superbowl care packages, and the current Gone Fishin' care packages. They have not only donated items for the dogs, but also for the handlers.

Below: The veterinary surgeons, and staff (and their dogs) of the Animal Hospital of Thousand Oaks, Calif.



Ashley, an employee of the DOG Bakery, decorates Fish Bone dog treats. The DOG Bakery is donating these treats to MWD TSA for the 2nd Quarter Gone Fishin' themed care packages.

Kendra (L) and Aiden Coleman (R) stand with a pile of boxes to be used for the 2nd Quarter care packages. The young MWD TSA volunteers prepared address labels, stuffed envelopes and folded, taped and stamped the boxes in preparation for the April 26 packing event hosted by MWD TSA volunteer Allison Merrill in Travers City, Mich.



Welcome Wagon Committee Rolls Out the Welcome Mat

Volunteers are how we roll. Yet, sometimes, volunteers are hesitant to step forward because they don't have an easy way to connect to MWD TSA. The goal of the Welcome Wagon Committee as we met and started our first project was to create a space and a product on our website geared towards gaining volunteers. On our new "Volunteer Central Page", potential volunteers can explore, read information and hear the stories of actual MWD TSA Volunteers. They can send emails with questions prior to any commitment or complete and submit a volunteer application. Our dedicated team will take turns monitoring the responses and help answer questions from interested individuals, while trying to help match them with the best possible positions and needs inside our organization.

As an all volunteer organization, volunteers are the lifeblood of everything we do. That means that each individual who volunteers with MWD TSA contributes to the support we provide to our military working dog teams. Each year, we successfully ship care packages, complete base visits and recognition events, educate the general public and advocate on behalf of retired dogs.

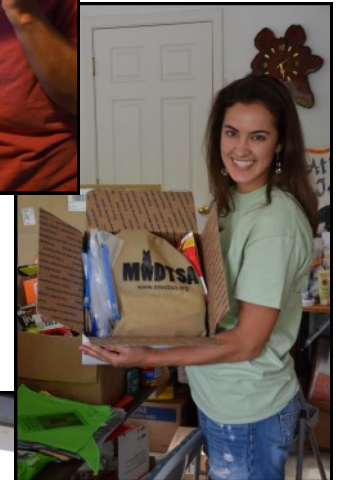
The work that volunteers provide is essential. It is real, tangible, and relied upon to help us reach and exceed our goals. Most of our volunteer efforts are virtual, which means a volunteer can join us from anywhere in the country and make a real contribution toward furthering our mutual goals.

Please contact our Volunteer Team at volunteers@mwdtsa.org to ask questions or to begin your journey with one of the most creative and hardworking non-profits going.

We have a unique and varied need of volunteer work, but we are always looking for motivated volunteers filled with energy and ideas. We could use some help in the following areas:

- Public Speaking
- Dog Tagz Online Store Manager
- Photography/Videography
- Writer—Stories and Articles for newsletter and online
- Social Media
- In Kind Donation Solicitations
- Artwork/Graphic Design
- Fund Raising
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Many, many other areas

The team at Volunteer Central looks forward to answering your MWD TSA Volunteer questions! We are Nikki Rohrig, SeDonna Asberry, Tabra Carn, Jerri Merklinger, Jeanne Dedrick and Dixie Whitman.



Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

Sit. Stay. Support.

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Kennel Talk is the proud recipient of a GSDCA Special
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Please Recycle by Sending to a Friend



From the Archives

During World War II, there were very real fears of the dangers of chemical or gas attacks. Amongst the gas masks developed was the M6-12-8, which was developed specifically for US war dogs. The mask included a coated canvas duck mask with a large, glued in, cellulose acetate eye piece. It was designed to fit over the muzzle and face of the dog. The outlet valve was located on the underside of the muzzle. This equipment was standardized in 1944, and declared obsolete in 1969.

Photos courtesy of the National Archives.

