

October 2014
Award Winning
Monthly Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue 10

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and highlights of 2014!

Kennel Talk is an award
winning MWD publication!

Inside this issue:

| | |
|--|----|
| A Hero's Tribute | 1 |
| Thanks from Downrange | 2 |
| Howl-O-Ween | 3 |
| KONGS for K9s | 4 |
| Meeting Jalk | 5 |
| An Interview with a MWD | 7 |
| Toy Testing 101 | 8 |
| Calif. Girl Scout Troop Supports MWDTSA | 9 |
| Support MWDTSA with AmazonSmile | 9 |
| From the Archives | 10 |

MWDTSA touches the
lives of dogs and people
near and far. This
month, our Kennel Talk
reports stretch from
Afghanistan to the US,
then coast to coast:
Florida to California ,
with stops in Virginia
and Georgia

Our Archive photo is
from Belgium during
World War I.

Subscribe to see where
we connect next month!

Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

MWDTSA KENNEL TALK



LLeonard, 6th Security Forces Squadron military working dog, arrived at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. this year after completing training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

A Hero's Tribute

Story and photos by Senior Airman Melanie Bulow-Gonterman

MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. - Looking around MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., it is easy to find tributes of fallen American heroes; from Helton Hall, in honor of 1st Lt. Joseph Helton who was killed in action while deployed in Iraq, to the Short Fitness Center named after Chief Master Sgt. Donald Short, popular for his extraordinary accomplishments over his 53 years of service to the Air Force.

However, if you look a little deeper at MacDill you might be surprised to see how far these tributes go.

LLeonard, 6th Security Forces Squadron military working dog, arrived to the base in early 2014. He was named after a war hero, Tech. Sgt. Leonard Anderson, who was severely injured in 2012 by an improvised explosive device blast while on a walking patrol in Af-

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Hero's Tribute continued from page 1

ghanistan. MWD LLeonard is one of many service dogs named after American heroes.

As a result of the most recent conflicts, more than 25 dogs have been named after fallen/injured dog handlers from all branches of service.

"We are always looking for strong suitable names to match up with the dogs that have originated from our breeding program," said Dr. Stewart Hillard, 341st Training Squadron MWD evaluations and breeding flight chief.

For the last 10 years, these four-legged service members have been named after American heroes and notable icons as well as American states, cities and topographical features. The dogs are even named after other great dogs in history, both military and civilian.

"A dog's name is special, it's not just a tag," stated Hillard. "If a puppy grows up to be a special animal, capable of being a military working dog, the name should match. It should have a distinctive sound

and normally be easy or lend itself a connotation that is easy to say for communication purposes."

Only dogs, like LLeonard, that originated from the breeding program at Lackland AFB, Texas are named after fallen heroes, American history, etc. The first letter of their name is duplicated to distinguish that they belong to the puppy program.

"By naming our dogs after fallen heroes, American landscape, culture, mythology, family and friends, we affirm what we are doing here; molding wonderful instruments of protection for use in defending our nation," said Hillard.

Below: Tech. Sgt. Leonard Anderson meets Military Working Dog LLeonard, who was named in tribute to him.



Thanks From Downrange

Right: This is MWD Vvogue, who is at an undisclosed location.

Her handler loved the care package and wanted to share her thanks to MWDTSA and the generous donors who made the 3rd quarter NASCAR themed boxes possible, including the Tony Stewart Foundation which gave graciously and unsparingly in support of the NASCAR theme. Note the custom t-shirt hanging behind Vvogue, featuring a cartoon created just for MWDTSA handlers by Jerry VanAmerogen, creator of the nationally syndicated 'Ballard Street' comic strip.

Our 4th Quarter care packages will be shipping out this month.



Howl-O-Ween

The 4th Quarter Care packages, with a Howl-O-Ween theme, will be assembled and mailed on October 15th.

The packaging event is being hosted by MWDTSA Volunteer Nikki Rohrig at her home in Abington, Va. Several of her neighbors have volunteered to help with the work.

Below: Some of the many donations we have received for our 4th. Qtr. Care packages include: 8 oz. bottles of Banixx anti-fungal spray, Pyranh, Inc. Pyrethrum shampoo, samples of Pawtector from Natural Dog Company, samples of Victor Dog Food from Mid-America Pet Food, Rehydrate canine hydration tabs from River City Pet Products and Kong Goodie Bones.

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:

Lois Anderson

Animal Hospital of Thousand Oaks, Thousand Oaks, Calif.

Leslie Ball

Dick Baumer

Bethany United Methodist Church, Smyrna, Ga.

CoreTex Products, Bakersfield, Calif.

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

Diamond Wipes International, Inc., Chino, Calif.

Gloria Greenidge

Pamela Kendrick

Lucky Duck Pet Stuff, Chesapeake Beach, Md.

Lupine Pet, Conway, N.H.

Dalene McIntire

Tasos Mihalopoulos

Operation Care for Heroes

Bobbie Parker

Petco Foundation, San Gabriel, Calif.

Bob and Karen Queen

Stephen Redden

Kristen San Antonio

Sherborne Corp., Pinehurst, N.C.

Jan Slotar

Top Dogs Pet Boutique, Kennesaw, Ga.

Sheila Vanada

Dixie Whitman

Kathie Woodring

SGM James and CPT Jamie Zadra



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KONGS for K9s

From Oct. 1 to 31, MWDTSA is launching the 2014 KONGS for K9s supply drive throughout several mom and pop shops across the nation. Customers can purchase and donate KONG Biscuit Balls, KONG Goodie Bones and KONG Classics which will later be matched by a free Kong Classic toy or KONG Extreme from the KONG Company. The donated toys will be sent in the quarterly care packages to deployed dog teams, and the matched toys are used during visits to kennels at stateside bases. The program allows MWDTSA to donate top quality toys while giving mom and pop stores the opportunity to connect with their community, support deployed dog teams and increase their sales.

Pet stores taking part include:

Leash On Life
Ms. Julie Phye
432 Highway 1 W
Iowa City, IA 52246
www.leashonlife.net
319-354-4334

Lucky Duck Pet Stuff
Ms. Carla Wynn
3723 E. Chesapeake Beach Road (Rt. 260)
Chesapeake Beach, MD 20723
<http://luckyduckpetstuff.com>
410-257-5080

Ma and Paw's Bakery
Ms. Diane Sanders
1227 East 3300 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84115
<http://www.maandpawsbakeryinc.com>
801-487-3838

Personal Beast
Ms. Jett Wyatt
8119 SE Stark St.
Portland, OR 97215
<http://personalbeast.biz/>
503-445-9449

Top Dogs Pet Boutique
Ms. Suzette Lindsey
2615 George Busbee Parkway
Kennesaw, GA 30114
<http://www.topdogs.net>
770-218-0602

A non-pet store drop off location is:

Veterans United Craft Brewery
Sheryl Gamble
8999 Western Way #104
Jacksonville, FL 32256
sgamble@vubrew.com
www.vubrew.com
904-253-3326
Veteran owned and operated

Supporters can stop by, or call and shop, by phone with a credit card or send a check to almost all of the pet stores participating.



Right: Carla Wynn standing beside her KONG posters in her store, Lucky Duck Pet Stuff, in Chesapeake Beach, Maryland.



Above: Julie Phye holding a KONG in her store, Leash On Life, in Iowa City, Iowa.

Left: (L to R) Sabine and Fabio Yepes and MWDTSA Volunteer Jerry Whitman display 'matching' KONGS that were donated to MWDTSA by KONG as part of our 2013 KONGS for K9s drive.



Meeting Jalk

by Dixie Whitman

Before the US Forces withdrawal from this part of Afghanistan, things were improving slowly in Bala Murghab, Afghanistan. This isolated valley had been the site of a prolonged and vicious battle between a well-entrenched Taliban and a joint command of American, Italian, Spanish and Afghan National Army soldiers; the battle was known as Operation Red Sand.

The area where it took place in the remote Afghani province of Bagdhis was protected by Forward Operating Base (FOB) Todd and maybe 12 to 15 tiny Combat Outposts (COP) in a fragile circle of security, which permitted the local families to return to their farms and their homes.

The COPs in Bala Murghab were not well fashioned. The area is isolated and the soldiers who manned the COPs lived and fought from trenches, a soldiering lifestyle that hadn't been seen since World War I. Supplies were air dropped in to FOB Todd, then convoyed out to the various COPs, in an effort to avoid the IEDs that were oftentimes planted near the supply lines.

Schools were opening again, at least inside the secured areas, for the first time in years, and families were able to reach the safety and security of small villages which were supported with supplies by their Italian, American and Spanish hosts.

But things were not always so stable. A heroic and hellish battle took place in this area in April of 2011, an operation known as Red Sand. During this battle, Valdo, the K9 attached to the American unit, took a hit from a rocket propelled grenade. Valdo survived after multiple surgeries, however, he did not return to the battle space.*

Valdo was instead replaced with two additional dogs. One of them was Jalk.

MWD TSA's initial contact with Jalk came from a mutual handler friend at a European base kennel that said one of their dog teams was deployed and needed supplies. "Could MWD TSA help?" The answer was, "Of course. What do you need?" After that tough deployment, we remained in touch and were delighted to hear that Jalk is now retired and living the life that we could only wish for all retired MWDs.

A couple of weeks ago, we had the opportunity to meet Jalk and his handler, Megan Francisco, in person. What an honor.

Please enjoy some of the photos of this handsome dog and his very brave handler during their deployment in 2011 and now, as a retired hero.

**(Editor's Note: See article 'Nothing More Vital to Battlefield Survival', in the Kennel Talk issue of July 2014).*

Top: MWD handler Megan Francisco and MWD Jalk on patrol.

Bottom Right: General Petraeus (2nd Left) meets Jalk and Megan.



Meeting Jalk continued on page 6

Meeting Jalk continued from page 5



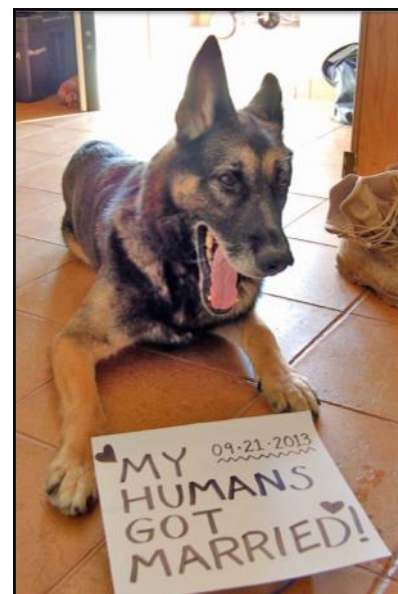
ABOVE Left: On patrol.

Left: Jalk and the Donkey (see interview page 7 of this issue).

Above : Megan and Jalk rappelling during training.

Above Right: Jalk goes vertical.

Right: If you follow our Facebook feed, this photo will be familiar to you.



Far Left: Megan and Jalk today.

Left: Despite the grey in his muzzle, Jalk is still a very handsome fellow.

Jalk Talk: An Interview with an MWD

MWD TSA had an opportunity to conduct an "in-person" interview with Jalk. We thought our readers would enjoy the world through the eyes (and nose) of a military working dog.

MWD TSA: Jalk, since we've known you for three years over the internet, it's a real joy to meet you in person. I'd like to ask a few questions to help our readers get a sense of "who Jalk is".

As an MWD, you were able to complete a lot of missions. What kinds of missions were your favorites?

Jalk: My favorite time is going out and doing security missions for the President of the United States or other VIP missions. I was able to go and see/pee many different places and at the end of the day I was with my mom in the hotel room. (Which by the way, rocks way better than anything in Afghanistan.)

MWD TSA: We know that the DoD only allows certain foods to be fed, but we wondered which non-DoD approved snack was your favorite?

Jalk: Bully sticks. Let's just say, they're made from an interesting part of the bull.

MWD TSA: What about your favorite dog toy?

Jalk: Bad Cuz. He's a hoot and so much more fun than Good Cuz. I must first destroy the squeaker and then I carry him around the house, never leaving him alone.

MWD TSA: We've seen photos of you with famous people and we know you protected the President as well as other VIPs. Which famous person was your favorite?

Jalk: To me fame has no value. As long as you have a good heart and you scratch behind my ears you are important to me!

MWD TSA: We first met you on a tour of Afghanistan. Tell us a bit about that.

Jalk: Afghanistan was tough. We did a lot of walking and the local dogs there are huge! I was able to meet so many people there. I was able to help soldiers when they were sad and missing home. They would come and sit with me and nothing else mattered. It made me feel good not only to lead missions outside the wire, sniffing a safe path, but being able to bring morale to the troops while they missed their families back home. I would comfort them and they would comfort me. There is a bond between soldiers that no one will ever be able to communicate. It just is. But you know it exists with a scratch behind the ear, a gaze into each other's eyes or a lick on the cheek.

MWD TSA: What was the best thing about Afghanistan?

Jalk: The very best part of Afghanistan was that I was never alone. When I was nervous my mom was there comforting me. We cuddled to stay warm while trying to catch a few hours of sleep before the next mission. So the cuddles were the best. And, the donkeys. Have you ever smelled a donkey? To a dog, they smell heavenly.

MWD TSA: What was the worst part about Afghanistan?

Jalk: Worst part of Afghanistan was not understanding what was going on during a fire fight. I always wanted to help but there was nothing I could do. Darned missing opposable thumbs!

MWD TSA: As a retired MWD, you are approaching that certain age. There's an old adage, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." What do you say?

Jalk: I am always learning new tricks. I have mastered the trick of putting my nose under people's hands to force them to pet me. (Plus they give me cookies. Wink, wink, nod, nod.)

MWD TSA: We know you were based in Italy for your service years and had a lot of friends over there. Who was your very best friend and why?

Jalk: My favorite MWD is MWD(r) Vazul. We were retired buddies in Italy. We would go on walks and he even shared his toys with me. He taught me to be best buddies with little humans. They always sneak treats during dinner time. :)

MWD TSA: Do you have any special humorous stories of your time on deployment?

Jalk: Anytime my mom would leave me, I would steal her socks and put them in my bed with me. It would drive her crazy but I loved the attention. Besides, they smelled heavenly. I mean, when you're a dog, you love your human and their feet are the best smells ever.

On our days off mom would take me running on the Helicopter Landing Zone. I would run one or two laps with her then I would find shade and lay down pretending I was tired. She caught on and started bringing a toy and made me work for it.

My mom is the best, as a working dog, I couldn't have had a better partner. As a retired MWD, I have the best home ever, filled to the brim with toys and love andhe...he...he...socks!

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions: Toy Testing 101

by Dixie Whitman

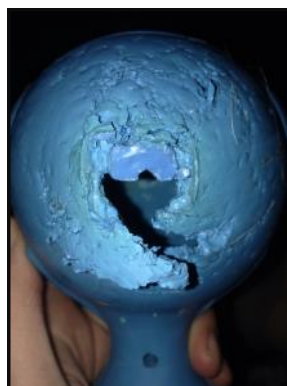


Each quarter as MWD TSA starts planning for our Care Packages, one of our favorite jobs is determining which toys might work well for our theme. For example, with the NASCAR themed boxes in July, we included KONG Traxx, toys that resemble tires. For our upcoming Howl-O-Ween themed boxes, we have KONG Goodies Bones on order, a nod to spooky skeletons.

KONG toys are among the most sought after toys due to their classic erratic bouncing shape and durable rubber that takes a lot of punishment from some really strong jaws. We have also tested and used other great toys made by West Paw Design and JW Pet.

MWDs can destroy some toys in 2 seconds to 15 minutes. These toys may be perfectly wonderful for less powerful, less driven dogs, but for our purposes, we want to send only the most durable toys to use as rewards.

In order to ensure that we have the right toy, from time to time we solicit the assistance of a panel of retired military working dogs. After all, who has more experience killing dog toys than older, retired military working dogs? Despite the grey in their muzzle and their slower pace, the drive to bite the dog toys never fades. With their input, MWD TSA is able to select the best toy choices available.



Above and above top: Retired MWD, Jalk, was an enthusiastic toy tester.

Left: Here is a toy that didn't make the grade. It is not a bad toy, but this is why we have to be very careful about what we send to our powerful chewers.

Girl Scout Troop #8401 of La Crescenta, Calif., Chooses MWD TSA as Service Project for 2014

Story by Jan Slotar

I met Girl Scout Leader LeAnna Martin, when she stopped by the MWD TSA booth with her daughter, at the American Heroes Air Show on June 21, 2014. She was looking at the sample care package display, as I was showing the items in the care package to a group of people and explaining what we send to the deployed MWD Teams.

As we were talking about the MWD Teams and what it takes to get the packages ready to ship, she told me that this was a project that her Girl Scout Troop might like to participate in.

LeAnna contacted me at the beginning of September, and let me know that her Girl Scout Troop was very interested in helping with the Military Working Dogs. I was more than happy to give them a MWD TSA presentation at their meeting on September 5, complete with the great photos of the 2014 calendar, my sample care package, and the photo essay book, "What Are Military Working Dogs".

Please welcome Girl Scout Troop #8401, of La Crescenta, Calif. They have chosen MWD TSA as their service project for the year. This group of bright young ladies, along with their Leaders, LeAnna Martin and Glenda Webster, will be helping out during the year with fundraising, gathering needed items for the MWD Team care packages, recycling aluminum cans, and volunteering at MWD TSA events, when they are able to do so. Their last ser-

vice project was with Guide Dogs of America in Sylmar, Calif., and we are honored that they have selected MWD TSA as their current service project.



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If you shop on Amazon.com, you can now support MWD TSA with your purchases.

The AmazonSmile program lets you register to support your charitable organization with .5% of some purchases made from Amazon. Purchases made via smile.amazon.com have exactly the same prices, selection of merchandise and convenient shopping as those made at amazon.com. The only difference is that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charity. There is no extra cost to you.

To make purchases at Amazon, and have the donation made to MWD TSA, please enter smile.amazon.com, as the URL, rather than amazon.com. Tens of millions of products on AmazonSmile are eligible for donations. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages.

You use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same. The Shopping Cart is the same interface that you already use.

You can register to support Military Working Dog Team Support Association Inc via smile.amazon.com.

If you already registered to support a charity, and wish to change to support MWD TSA, there is a convenient link at the top left of the web page indicating which charity you are supporting. Clicking on this brings up a dialogue with the option to change charities. When registering, please use the full name, rather than MWD TSA, as the search engine does not recognize the initials.

For more information about the AmazonSmile program: <http://smile.amazon.com/about>.

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From the Archives

In pre-World War I Europe, dogs had many roles, including that of pulling small carts for deliveries of groceries, milk and other items. When war broke out, many European countries adapted these carting dogs' abilities for military purposes.

In August 1914, the Belgian Army was using dogs to pull gun carriages and carts hauling supplies to the Front, and the wounded back from the Front.

When the conflict eventually resolved into trench warfare, the use of dogs for carting ended, for the most part.

Right: In World War I, Belgian dogs were trained to pull Maxim guns on small carriages. The cart and gun weighed about 230 pounds.

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