

September 2014
Award Winning
Monthly Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue 9

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MWDTSA touches the
lives of dogs and people
near and far. This
month, our Kennel Talk
reports stretch from
Washington State,
Arizona, Alabama and
Georgia, and include
several fundraising op-
portunities you can par-
ticipate in. Our archive
photo comes all the way
from the former Soviet
Union.

Subscribe to see where
we connect next month!

Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

MWDTSA KENNEL TALK



Uno, a Weimaraner, and Blitz, a Belgian Shepherd Malinois, get some fresh air with dog handlers Pfc. Alexis Bond and Staff Sgt. David Heinzig at the 42nd Military Police Brigade dog kennels Aug. 1, on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. The retired military working dogs are kenneled here until their former handlers finish adopting them. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James J. Bunn, 5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

New Lives for Old Dogs

Story by Sgt. James Bunn

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. - Throughout the ages, dogs have served as a valuable asset to militaries everywhere. In modern times they continue to serve with U.S. Soldiers in some of the most dangerous conflicts ever.

Prior to the year 2000, when a military working dog was retired from service, it was euthanized. On Sept. 27, 2000, Congress passed Robby's Law, which allows military dogs to be adopted once they retire.

"I'm glad the law was changed and the military can adopt these dogs out," said Staff Sgt. Daniel Heinzig, an operations sergeant with 504th Military Police Battalion, 42nd MP Brigade at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. "They deserve to be adopted. They have put a lot on the line and risked their lives for us. The least we can do is give them a home."

Lackland Air Force Base in Texas runs the Military Working Dog school and adoption program. According to their website they receive hundreds of adoption applications annually,

New Lives continued on page 2

www.mwdtsa.org

New Lives continued from page 1

and the dog stays at the base where it retires until it is adopted.

"When a military dog retires, we take care of them here until they're adopted," said Heinzig. "Anyone can adopt one."

The majority of animals adopted go to their former handlers, but Lackland has younger dogs available for adoption according to Heinzig.

"The last handler gets first dibs on his dog," said Heinzig. "We know the dogs, and it's easier for us to adopt them."

The wait time to adopt one is about 12 to 18 months because of the limited number that retire each year. Heinzig suggests people fill out an application as soon as they know they want to adopt.

There is no cost for people to adopt, but future owners will need to pay for transportation of the dog. Potential owners should also be aware of the possible health challenges that these dogs will face.

"A lot of these dogs will have joint issues and other aches and pains because they have been working their whole lives," said Heinzig. "Many of them are getting retired at 9 or 10 years old, and for a large breed dog that's miraculous."

Other considerations when adopting a MWD may include making sure they have plenty of space to exercise and a safe place to sleep. They were working dogs and are happiest when they have something to do, Heinzig added.

Aggression may be a concern for many people; after all, they are military dogs and some were trained to bite as part of their jobs. Before a retired MWD can be adopted, it is screened for suitability. The dogs are put through a three-phase test to determine their ability to transition to a household pet.

"The first test is to see if the dog responds aggressively when the owner is verbally assaulted," said Heinzig. "The second test is to see how the dog responds when it is yelled at and the third determines how it responds to the bite pads we use to train them."

The majority of the dogs pass, and the likelihood that one will bite is almost zero according to Heinzig. These dogs are trained to respond to their handlers and are very well trained. The key is to spend time with the dogs.

"If you can train a dog to do something, you can certainly train it not to do it as well," said Heinzig. "Contrary to popular belief, you can teach an old dog new tricks."

"The available animals range from patrol dogs to drug and explosives detection dogs," said Sgt. Eric Harter, a dog handler with the 504th MP Battalion. "Rather than calling the kennel here on base to see what dogs we have here, potential adopters should contact the adoption program at Lackland."

New owners of retired MWDs sign a document that forbids them from using the dog for any of the activities they trained for during their military career, said Heinzig. The document protects the military and the dog from misuse.

Currently, two dog handlers here at Lackland are in the process of adopting MWDs they partnered with. The two dogs are being retired after experiencing injuries during their years of service which prevent them from keeping up with the rigorous work demands required of them.

"I'm looking forward to spending time with my dog, Blitz, off duty and giving him the life he deserves," said Harter. "I picked him up on June 2011 and deployed with him in 2012 to Afghanistan."

Anyone interested in adopting a retired Military Working Dog can log onto www.jbsa.af.mil and look for the adoption program.

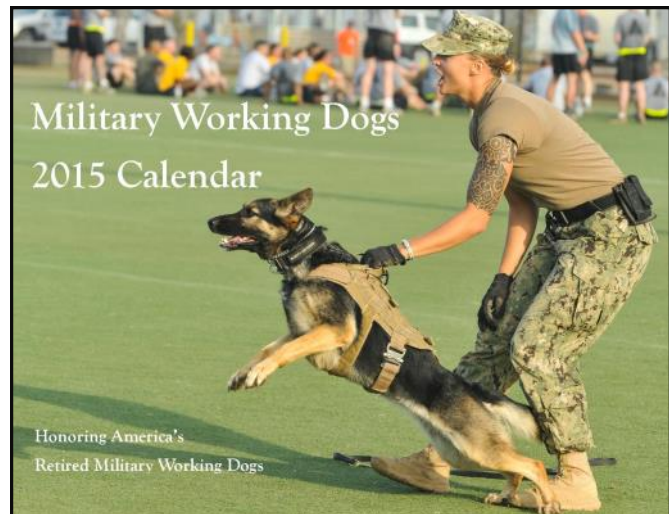
(Editors Note: See page 8 for further photos of Uno, featured on the front page photo of this article.)

2015 MWDTSA Calendar

Our 2015 calendar will be the third calendar produced as an educational fundraiser for our organization. While the photos illustrating each month are of the highest quality, we are also proud of the connections that allowed us to include personal, candid photos of some of our retired military working dogs at home with their handlers and best friends. We think you will truly enjoy this calendar.

There are three photos each of Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine K-9s.

Visit our website at www.mwdtsa.org and place your order. Only a limited number remain at \$15 postage paid. Funds received from the sale of these calendars help with our many missions.



Paws to Read



At the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, researchers have the data to prove that kids, dogs and books make a great combination. Their work has led to the recognition that many children become better readers when they regularly read aloud; the patient and non-judgmental audience dogs offer helps reluctant readers gain confidence and improve their reading skills.

Many libraries and animal organizations have developed reading programs pairing up kids and dogs. Amongst these programs is Paws to Read.

At Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., a base wide program was inaugurated this summer. SSgt Jessica Keller, Kennel Master, and the handlers and MWDs of Luke AFB

K-9 provided a unique learning experience for the children taking part in the program.

SSgt Keller, accompanied by retired MWD Oscar, talked to the children at the Luke AFB Library about the importance of reading. The K-9 team provided a demonstration of the MWDs' capabilities. The handlers and dogs involved in the demonstration were SSgt Jessie Keller handling Oscar and SSgt Justin Lopez with MWD Mayo. The decoy for the demonstration was SSgt Kurtis Buchawiecki.

Later this year, the K-9 team plans to come back to have the children read to the MWDs, and for the handlers to read to the children.

Top: The children, handlers and MWDs outside the Luke AFB Library.

Below: SSgt Justin Lopez and Mayo demonstrated the MWDs' capabilities to the children attending the event.

All photos courtesy of SSgt Jessica Keller.



Paws to Read continued from page 3



Above four photos: SSgt Jessica Keller and retired MWD Oscar in the Luke AFB Library. Oscar seems to be in favor of books and reading—both as listener and reader.



Above and Right: SSgt Justin Lopez and MWD Mayo with decoy SSgt Kurtis Buchawiecki demonstrated the MWD at work to the audience of children from Luke AFB taking part in the Paws to Read program.

Fort Stewart/HAAF Demo

by Avril Roy-Smith

While 3D MP Group (CID), based on Hunter Army Air Field (HAAF), Ga., is a part of the Military Police, many of the personnel are soldiers from supporting specialties or civilians. The current company commander of the HHD (Headquarters Detachment), Captain Latisha Brooks, tries to familiarize these unit members with different facets of the MPs and Criminal Investigation Division (CID) by arranging demonstrations of varying skills and specializations.

In July, CPT Brooks asked seven handlers and MWDs from the 93D MWD Detachment based in Fort Stewart, Ga., to travel to HAAF to demonstrate the role of the MWDs. I was invited to attend in my capacity as VP of MWD TSA, and as the mother of the previous company commander.

The demonstrations included drug sniffing, where the MWD was trained to sit when he sensed the presence of drugs; explosive detection, where the dog was

trained to lie down when he found explosive material; protection work, showing the behaviors required on initial encounter, escorting a suspect, protection of the handler in cases of attack by the suspect; and apprehending a fleeing suspect.

After the demonstrations, the military members and civilians present were invited to take the role of decoy. Three attendees volunteered to be decoys and donned the heavy full protection suit.

After the demonstrations, I presented the handlers with MWD TSA t-shirts and Kongs for their MWDs.

An invitation was extended to MWD TSA to visit the Fort Stewart Kennels in their new location. Plans are underway for a visit by various MWD TSA volunteers to the kennels in the fall.



Top Right: SPC Madden's MWD appeared eager to work.

**Right: (From L to R):
SGT Mark Johnson;
SPC Miguel Martinez;
PFC Molly Roper;
PFC Kinsey Knorr-Watson;
CPT Latisha Brooks;
SPC Christopher Featherman;
SPC Madden.**

SSG Christopher Ogle had to leave the demonstration early and was not available to appear in the group photograph.

All photographs courtesy of CPT Latisha Brooks.



Ft Stewart/HAAF Demo continued from page 5

***This page:***

After the demonstrations, the military members and civilians present were invited to take the role of decoy. Three attendees volunteered to be decoys and donned the heavy full protection suit.



Maxwell AFB, Gunter Annex MWD Memorial

by Sara Matlack

There are numerous Military Working Dog memorials located throughout the United States, as I recently found out while creating a list of War Dog Memorials.

The memorial at the Air Force Enlisted Heritage Research Institute, located on Maxwell Air Force Base, Gunter Annex, in Montgomery, Ala., is part of the Heritage Plaza. There are 11 monuments in the complex: the Bicentennial-first 200 years, Enlisted Pilots 1912-1942, Korean War, Southeast Asia-Vietnam, Delta Force 1980-Iran, Southwest Asia-Persian Gulf, Khobar Towers, SMSgt Sherry Lyn Olds-Kenya Embassy, Allied Force-Kosovo, Noble Eagle, and Military Working Dog Monument.

The initial dedication and unveiling of the MWD memorial occurred on November 9, 2002. The final dedication for the entire Heritage Plaza was on Saturday, Feb. 15, 2003.

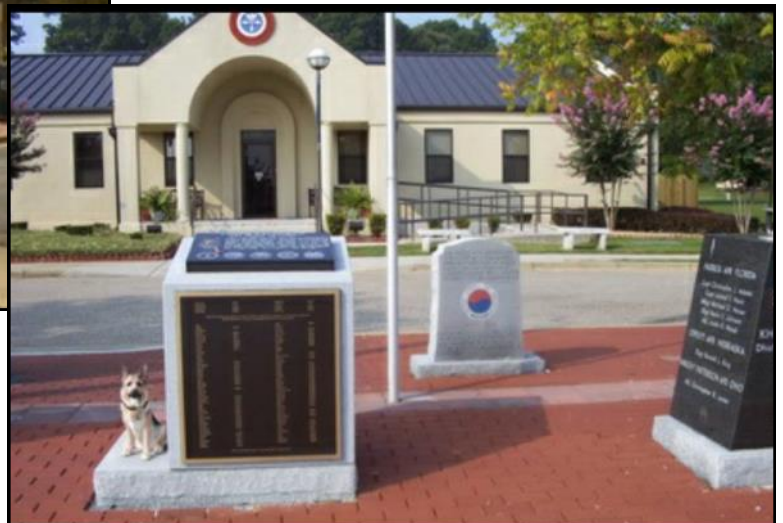
The MWD memorial is unique in that it lists only the names of canine heroes from Southeast Asia. It is also unique in that it honors only the Military Working Dogs but not their handlers. The cost of the plaques were funded by the handlers who each paid a small fee to have the names of their dogs engraved.

The names of 93 MWDs are listed in alphabetical order.

On the top of the monument is a plaque reading: "In Dedication To All Working Dogs, Past, Present and Future". Underneath those words is an affectionately written paragraph *"I will lay down my life and expect nothing but love in return. I protect with my life, and would gladly take a bullet. I am sent in to find the enemy, weapons, bombs and drugs. I am the first sent in and sometimes the last to leave. I am the nose and ears of my handlers. I would die for my handler and for you. I only ask for compassion and a kind word. I will protect and defend!!!"* Below that are inset the emblems of the five branches of the US military. On the side of the memorial are the plaques with the names of Military Working Dogs. It is guarded by a statue of a German Shepard Dog, posed next to the memorial.

Until I started researching the many MWD memorials, I was one of the many people unaware of the great injustice that occurred at the end of the Vietnam War, when the MWDs were designated as excess equipment when the war ended. The MWDs were not brought home, to be adopted out to their former handlers or to new, loving families but were euthanized or left behind in Vietnam, Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries.

Memorials such as the one at Maxwell AFB, Gunter Annex serve many purposes: to honor, to represent and to educate. I look forward to what I will learn in my research on other memorials.



ThirtyOne Fundraiser

by Nikki Rohrig

MWD Uno is a gorgeous Weimaraner that recently retired and was adopted by his handler, Isaac Trevino. Uno came home to a loving family and will certainly enjoy his retirement!

Isaac's wife, Crystal, wants to give back to MWD TSA for supporting Isaac and Uno while they were deployed. Crystal sells ThirtyOne products and has graciously offered to do a fundraiser for MWD TSA.

Anyone can order these products and they will be shipped right to your front door! MWD TSA will receive 15% of the total sales from this show and we want to invite you to browse the ThirtyOne products and place your own order.

ThirtyOne is excited to debut their new fall catalog on September 1, so you have a chance to be the first to order their new Fall patterns!

As an added bonus, the September guest special is a great one. For every \$35 you spend (excluding tax & shipping) you can purchase the All-Day Organizing Tote for only \$15, normally \$45. This is a great bag and has four inside pockets and a zip top closure, as well as an outside pocket that can be embroidered.

There is no limit to the number of guest specials that can be purchased. You have a chance to real-

ly stock up on this great tote.

To take part in this MWD TSA fundraiser, go to Crystal's website at www.mythirtyone.com/crystal31 and click on "My Parties" tab to choose the MWD TSA fundraiser. (This will make sure your order goes toward our fundraiser.) You can browse through the products and create your own unique item, as most of their products can be personalized.

ThirtyOne offers many different styles of totes, purses, organizational products and accessories. All orders can be placed directly on the website. This is a great opportunity for you to get some early Christmas shopping done!

The fundraiser will start on **September 1 and run through September 15**. At the close of the show, all orders will be submitted. It usually takes 2-3 weeks to receive your order.

If you have any questions, you can contact Crystal by email at tistal0486@hotmail.com. She is happy to answer any questions about the products or embroidery options.

Who doesn't like to shop in their pajamas, in the comfort of their own home? Seriously, what are you waiting for? Happy hunting!



Top: MWD Uno is all dressed up and ready to work! (Uno is also pictured on the front page of this issue as part of the feature article.)

Bottom Left: Uno is officially retired! Here he is headed home with his loving family.

Below: Here's a sneak peek at the guest special. What a great bag!



New fall style!
THE ALL-DAY ORGANIZING TOTE:

Only \$15 ~~\$45~~
WITH EVERY \$35 YOU SPEND*

Our first utility tote with four pockets inside!

Zip-top closure!

Add personalization on the pocket!

NEW! BLACK CHEQUER
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NEW! WHITE DOT

Planning family fun!

ALL-DAY ORGANIZING TOTE (TOTE) \$45 \$15 OFF

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Relearning Old Lessons, Again

By COL Dick Baumer, USA (Ret.)

During the Vietnam War, we had three different dog food options for our military working dogs, at least the Labradors that served with my Combat Tracker Platoon—bags of dry kibble dog food, cases of canned wet food and 5 gallon pails of Gaines Burgers. If you're not old enough to remember the latter, these were formed semi-moist patties about the size of hockey pucks, each wrapped in plastic. Despite the plastic, they had a moderate garlic scent, a nod to civilians who were encouraged to consider them a substitute for canned dog food.

burgers, each of the five human members of the tracker team stuffing some of them in their cargo pockets along with our own LRP rations. We also all carried extra water, just for the dog.

When I first became a volunteer with the MWD TSA I learned quite by accident that many of the handlers were asking for Ziploc® bags. Puzzled we asked why and heard that the handlers often had to scrounge around their base asking for bags in which to put food to carry with them on missions. Turns out that the

military now only provides the dry and wet versions that our dogs enjoyed—there are no longer any "field rations" provided for the dogs. Gaines Burgers ceased production in the 1990s.

We recently became aware of a company in Oregon called TurboPUP that makes K9 Food Bars. It was founded by an Air Force OIF/OAF veteran C-130 pilot who saw the need for a portable food bar. She and her food scientist husband

wanted something light and portable to take with them for her dog when hiking, camping, and kayaking. TurboPup bars are 100 percent grain free, all natural, American sourced and human grade that are safe on sensitive stomachs and easy to interchange with regular dog

food. Each 2.2-oz. bar (Bacon or Peanut Butter flavor) is packed with about 250 calories; they come in a one or two bar pack.

Depending upon the size of the dog, 1-4 bars per day are enough to provide the calories and nutrition an active outdoor dog needs.

They have a shelf life of one year, don't take up much room and let you leave the pet food bags and food bowls at home. The company is now geared up in full production, and TurboPup bars have been adopted as the official dog food of the National Association for Search and Rescue. But as far as we know, the military has not yet shown any interest in these field rations for deployed MWDs.

The company's founder and CEO Kristina Guerrero donated TurboPUP K9 bars for our July care packages and we encouraged the handlers, especially the kennel masters, to find out

why they don't have this type of field ration alternative. We've "liked" them from our MWD TSA Facebook page. Check out the TurboPUP website at www.turbopup.com and give them a try. The bars would also be perfect for home emergency supplies and "go bags" if you live in areas prone to floods, fires, earthquakes or hurricanes.

COL Baumer was the Commanding Officer of the 62nd Infantry Platoon (Combat Tracker), serving with the 1st Air Cavalry Division during 1969. He is the 2nd VP of the MWD TSA.



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From the Archives

One of the more bizarre and, ultimately, unworkable ideas for using military working dogs was attempted by the Soviet Union. Starting in the 1930s, dogs were trained for anti-tank purposes. These dogs were to be fitted with tilt-rod mines, and were trained to run beneath enemy tanks. The tilt-rod was designed to detonate the mine under the tank.

The dogs were trained on stationary Russian tanks. In practice, the dogs did not want to run under moving tanks, but would run beside them. When presented with both German and Russian tanks, the dogs preferred to target the familiar Russian tanks.

Fortunately, the program was dropped.

The photograph to the right was taken in 1931 and shows a Soviet military dog training school near Moscow.



This photograph is not an object of copyright according to Part IV of Civil Code No. 230-FZ of the Russian Federation of December 18, 2006.