

December 2015
Award Winning
Monthly Newsletter

Volume 7, Issue 12

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and highlights of 2016!

Kennel Talk is an award
winning MWD publication!

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MWDTSA touches the
lives of dogs and people
near and far. This
month, our articles and
photos take us from
West Virginia, to Vir-
ginia, North Carolina,
South Carolina, Missis-
sippi, Texas and around
the world to Belgium,
South Korea, Afghani-
stan and more.

Subscribe to see where
we connect next month!

Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

MWDTSA KENNEL TALK



A coalition security force member stands watch with his loyal partner during a mission that arrested a Haqqani facilitator in Pul-e 'Alam district, Logar province, Jan. 28, 2013. The detained Haqqani facilitator funded multiple Haqqani cells operating in Pul-e 'Alam district. He coordinated the purchase and transfer of weapons with Taliban and Haqqani senior leaders. (U.S Army photo by Pfc. Coty M. Kuhn)

Call To Support

Since our founding in 2006, MWDTSA has had the opportunity to support hundreds of MWD teams that are stateside and deployed overseas. It is our pleasure to provide a little piece of home to those who are in foreign lands or to provide some supplies, toys and treats to those who are holding down the fort here at home. As we approach the end of our ninth year, we would like to thank our supporters and donors for an amazing year and for continuing to help us to 'support both ends of the leash.'

In 2015, we sent our 34th through the 37th consecutive quarterly care packages to over 500 deployed MWD teams. This impacted over 1200 handlers and dogs and it couldn't be done without the support of our amazing donors. We encourage you to support these companies that are listed under the donor section on our webpage. They have given so much to us and we want you to help us give back to them. We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to two of our biggest donors for 2015. A \$5000 grant from the Betsy Ross Foundation was used to provide dog toys and T-shirts in our care packages throughout

the year. A \$2500 grant from the American Humane Association paid the postage for our 4th quarter care packages. We look forward to continuing our relationship with AHA in 2016 where they will continue to fund our care package postage.

MWDTSA is a growing organization and we are happy to say that we added quite a few volunteers this year. We now have over 50 volunteers helping our 7 board members. Together they accounted for more than 3500 hours in our year-to-date numbers. Isn't that amazing? Especially since MWDTSA has paid \$0 in salaries or travel reimbursements. Our volunteers are active because we believe in these great teams and we want them to thrive. Our paycheck comes in the form of smiles and tail wags!

Our care package numbers are growing, considering the state of affairs around the world right now. If you would like to help us support our hard working MWD teams, we encourage you to make a PayPal donation on our website, make a purchase from our Amazon Wish

Call to Support continued on page 4

South Carolina War Dog Memorial Dedication

Story and photos by D. G. Whitman



Below: Johnny Mayo, Scout Dog Handler with the 39th Infantry Platoon Scout Dogs (IPSD) from Vietnam addresses a large crowd of handlers, supporters and well-wishers from the podium on Veterans Day in Columbia, South Carolina.



On Veterans Day 2015, Johnny Mayo's vision for a South Carolina War Dog Memorial was finally realized in the stunning setting of Columbia, South Carolina's Memorial Park. Johnny is a Vietnam era Scout Dog handler who has been a friend for over ten years. After the National War Dog Memorial was disallowed in Washington, D.C., he was determined to see one erected in South Carolina.

Cheered on by hundreds, the emotions of all of the Vietnam era dog handlers present and participating in the unveiling were visceral, honest and unscripted.

MWD TSA is honored to have been present at the dedication and are thankful to those who have kept the undying bond between handler and dog sacred.

If you find yourself in Columbia, S.C. this park is a few short blocks from the Capitol building and encompasses numerous memorials, which are both inspirational and lovely in their setting. MWD TSA was honored to support this wonderful memorial with a matching donation.

Please enjoy a few photos taken from the day because words simply cannot do this event justice.

Left: The monument-sized statue finds a final resting place in Columbia, South Carolina's stunning Memorial Park. Sculptress Renee Bemis painstakingly recreated the look and feel of a dog team in country as the dog first alerts.

Below: Approximately 25 dog handlers from the Carolinas and around the country made the trip to participate in the unveiling of this statue. The group unveiled the statue together, brothers-in-arms, always.



Copyright D. G. Whitman

Kelly 1970 819A
w/Johnny Mayo



Kelly 819A was the inspiration for this dog. He took point on missions from October of 1970 through February of 1971. Kelly's identification Tattoo, 819A, is visible in the left ear of this gorgeous statue.



MWD TSA Spokesdog, Tank, posed with many heroes. From left to right: MSG Lavalley (current Kennel Master with the Army), Vietnam era handlers, Pete Peters (Army Scout Dog Handler), Dick King (Navy Sentry Dog Handler) and Bill Wiggington (Air Force Sentry Dog Handler).

South Carolina War Dog continued from page 3



Please enjoy these additional photos from the day of the ceremony:

Top left: Jacky Bayne is greeted by MWD TSA Board Member, Allison Merrill, and Tank.

Top right: Handlers salute. Top is Army handler, SSG Vaughn, whom MWD TSA supported on his last deployment. Below him is Bob Baker, a Vietnam era Combat Tracker. Both Army handlers worked with black Labrador retrievers.

Left: The South Carolina War Dog Memorial looks over the gorgeous Memorial Park in downtown Columbia, SC.

Call to Support con't

List or mail a check to the address listed on the last page of this issue. Any items purchased go directly to our teams and any monetary donations are used to purchase much-needed supplies. A donation of \$5 or \$5000 will help to keep our organization up and running. Your donation is like the threads of a quilt. Each thread makes the quilt bigger and stronger! Your year-end donations will provide us with a solid base to provide support throughout 2016. Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc. (MWD TSA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and as such, donations are tax-deductible.

Volunteering with MWD TSA has been a hugely rewarding experience for me. As we move into a new year, we've got big things in store and we want to encourage you to be a part of that. Fill out a volunteer application on our website at www.mwdtsa.org and become part of our family. On behalf of our team of volunteers, we would like to wish you a happy holiday season. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Nikki Rohrig, MWD TSA President

Call to Support continued from page 1



MWD TSA is committed to ethics in everything we do. We are honored to be among the select few non-profit organizations to receive the GuideStar Gold Participant seal.

Fort Bliss: Base Visit to South Texas

In October, MWDTSA had an opportunity to do a base visit to the Fort Bliss kennels. They are a part of the 513th Military Police Detachment, 93rd Military Police Battalion in El Paso, TX. The visit started with a meet and greet with handlers and their MWDs, followed by a great demonstration, a tour of the kennels and lunch provided by MWDTSA. We also had a pleasure to meet our guest and former Army Combat Tracker from Vietnam, Charles "Chuck" Steward. As gifts for the dogs, we brought Chuck It Launchers, Flying Squirrels and dog bowls from Platinum Pets.

Our host, SSG Sanford, was incredibly helpful. He was supported by MWDTSA while deployed. He guided us step by step through their facilities, answering all of our questions and explaining all the training that was being performed during the demo. His professionalism was very well demonstrated and it was personified in the dogs under his watch.

Fort Bliss is the Army's second-largest installation, behind the adjacent White Sands Missile Range. It is FORSCOM's (United States Army Forces Command) largest installation, and has the Army's largest Maneuver Area (992,000 acres) ahead of the National Training Center, (642,000 acres).

Overall we had a very successful visit and the handlers were very grateful for all MWDTSA does for them.

Photos and article by Kathy Declet-Reed



Photos top to bottom:

Top: SSG Sanford received one of our challenge coins from Volunteer Kathy Declet-Reed.

Second from top: Charles "Chuck" Steward joined us as a guest and the current dog handlers loved hearing him share some of his stories from his time as a Combat Tracker in Vietnam.

Third from the top: SPC Kelley with MWD Norris and SPC Reno with MWD Kyra double team SPC Falk.

Bottom: SSD Shadow trying out a flying squirrel.

A special shout out thank you to Kathy who headed out on her own on her very first visit.

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 donations:

American Humane Association, Inc.
 Asbury Class, Bethany United Methodist Church,
 Smyrna, GA
 Bluemoonmel
 Catherine Schneider
 Christa Ursini
 Connie Glynn
 David Mintz
 Delca Corp., Laguna Niguel, Calif.
 Dick Baumer
 Eddie and Jeni Neely
 Edith Sorenson & Family
 Heather Trapasso
 Jan Slotar
 Jerri Merklinger
 Jennifer Burke
 Jody Ayers
 Kathy Woodring
 Kerri Moss
 Laurie Newton
 Linda from Amazon
 Mary Hebert
 Maryanne Steurer
 Monika James & Family
 Nikki Rohrig
 Patricia Armstrong Dressler Foundation
 Westport, Ct.
 Patricia Carter
 Paul McCoy & Elisha McCoy
 Richard Snyder
 San Francisco Bay Gourmet Coffee,
 Rogers Family Company, Lincoln, Calif.
 Shannon Thompson
 Sharon and Patrick Oriol
 Stanton Bost
 Stephen Redden
 Tamara Nifong
 Top Dogs Pet Boutiques, Roswell & Kennesaw, Ga.

Volunteering From A Distance

By Jan Slotar

Military Working Dog Team Support Association is built on a volunteer network. Although MWD TSA started out as a non-profit based in Georgia, we now have a network of volunteers literally around the globe.

We have volunteers who are Vietnam Era dog handlers, active duty MWD handlers, spouses of MWD handlers, former MWD handlers, graphic designers, photographers, volunteer firefighters, grandparents, business owners, college students, purchasing agents, moms and dads, dog trainers, and teachers.

Our volunteers stretch across the continental United States and beyond. We have had volunteers in Hawaii, Belgium and South Korea, anywhere the internet connects you. Regardless of the time zones, you can still volunteer.

You can post a message on Facebook, send an email, check out a potential donor, or even organize a fundraiser where you live, all from a distance. We communicate via email, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and phone.

We write articles, design t-shirts, fundraise, solicit donations, visit military base kennels, pack and mail care packages, sew dog bandanas, design patches and challenge coins, write letters, send drawings to the handlers and dogs, raise awareness in our local communities and social networks.

If you don't have time to volunteer, and you want to help out in another way, you can simply visit Amazon.com, and purchase an item from our Wish List, for either the dogs or handlers.

Please visit Volunteer Central on our website for more information, or to fill out a Volunteer Application.

<http://mwdtsa.org/>, <http://mwdtsa.org/volunteer.html>



Linda Costa-Bryan, from Hawaii, volunteers to help us with our Social Media.

He's Bad, He's Really Bad

Another base visit to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base is in the books for MWD TSA. Allison Merrill and I had the opportunity to get a tour of the MWD kennel on base. We got to meet several handlers as well as the Kennel Master and Trainer.

Even though there are several MWDs at the kennel, one of them stands out from the pack: Bad. MWD Bad is a striking bi colored German Shepherd and he hits like a freight truck. Don't believe me? Ask the decoy!

We got to witness Bad in action during a bite work demo. He and his handler were out on 'patrol' and when a suspect, aka the decoy, wouldn't cooperate, Bad was immediately on alert. When his handler said the magic word, Bad launched toward the decoy.

He ran about 30 yards and hit onto the decoy's back, throwing him down to the ground. Bad's handler came over and took the suspect into custody and had him stand up, only to have the suspect shove him out of the way and run in another direction. Bad's watchful eyes never moved off of the decoy and when the decoy ran, Bad turned into a fur missile and launched himself onto the decoy again and brought him down to the ground.

There was definitely a prance in Bad's step as they walked the suspect back toward the kennel. He was quite proud of himself, yet still watchful of the threat that was still walking before him.

The amount of training that goes into each MWD team is endless. They're always training, always learning new things. MWD TSA is honored to provide support to these teams whether they are stateside or out of country. We hope you enjoy the pictures from our visit.

Story and photos by Nikki Rohrig



Photos top to bottom:

Top: Handlers pose with their MWD TSA watch caps and coffee mugs.

Center: Bad keeping an eye on his suspect. His proud prance is easy to spot, even in a still photo. "Go, Bad!"

Bottom: A typical kennel set up. You can see MWD Bad's tactical vest hanging up outside his kennel. MWD's can wear these while out on patrol so it is important to get the dog used to wearing the proper equipment.

Quantico Iron Dog Competition



Handlers from multiple military installations and law enforcement agencies joined the Marines at Quantico for a friendly competition among dog handlers during the month of October. The Iron Dog Competition included a dummy drag, agility course, firearm event, tactical obedience and two mile run. Additionally the dogs were tested on detection and bite work. MWD TSA participated in this event by sending T shirts and mugs to each participant.

Above: Photo showcasing some of the handlers at the event and the goodies provided by MWD TSA.

Below left: a photo sent as a thank you to MWD TSA along with a challenge coin, below right, from the Kennels at Marine Helicopter Squadron One.



A Chance to Experience Nirvana

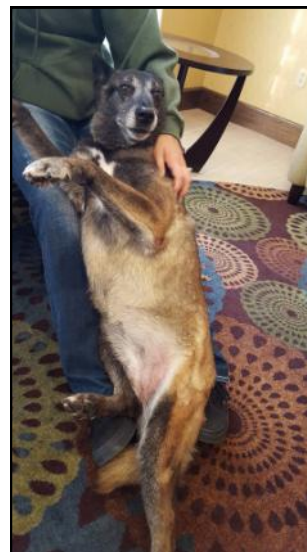
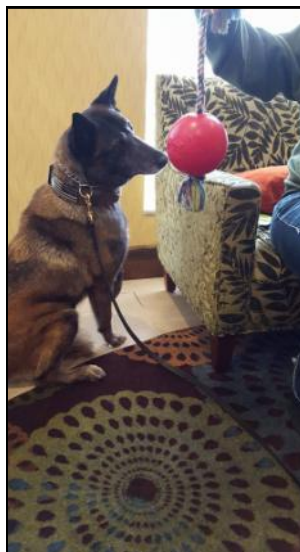
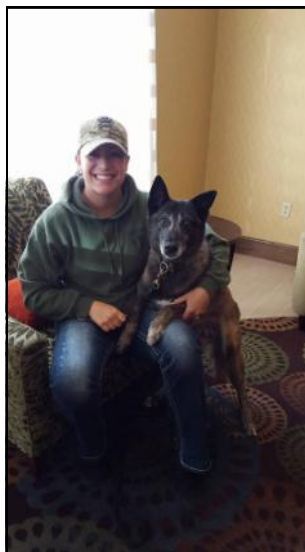
Part of the joy of working with MWDs is when you get a chance, to meet and greet the dogs and handlers in person. Even more special is a one on one visit where you can sit and chat. Recently, one of the teams that we showcased protecting the Popemobile, was on a mission and happened to be in the same neck of the woods as our President, Nikki Rohrig.

Not one to let an opportunity go to waste, Nikki made arrangements to meet and greet Nirvana and her handler, Monica Gazillion, while they were in town.

We thought we'd share some of the great photos of this event.

MWD TSA President, Nikki Rohrig, poses with MWD Nirvana at a recent one on one meeting.

We never arrive at these things empty handed so Nirvana went home with several cool new toys.



Above: Handler Monica Gazillion and MWD Nirvana pose for some photos.

Bottom left: Nirvana got several new toys, but apparently, really loved the new black Frisbee.

Bottom right: Those eyes are in crazy play mode. She's loving her new toy.



4th Quarter Care Package Photos

Our work is never done. We don't get finished with one packing before we are well on our way to working on the next one. We shared many photos with you last month of boxes as they were beginning to arrive down range. We have received many more photos and thank you notes and wanted to share a few of them with you. Thanks to all of the donors, supporters, the packing team and especially Allison Merrill for her leadership in getting this 4th quarter box done right! And, a huge thank you to American Humane Association (AHA) for their generous donation of \$2,500 to cover the postage costs on our 4th quarter boxes.

Right top: Handsome MWD Varato poses with all of the contents of his care package. He was so excited, he knocked the display over multiple times before the photo was accomplished.

Right center: MWD Meki dives in to play with his favorite new toy, the KONG Stick.

Below left: MWD Meki and his handler pose for a photo showing off the new watch caps sent out in the Michigan: Mayhem and Music boxes.



Right: MWD Nninja is not quite convinced that he needs to wear the watch cap. However, the handlers loved the caps so much that we have added them to our "Dog Tagz" store. If you would like to have one of your very own, visit our "Dog Tagz" store here:

<http://mwdtsa.org/store/>



Michigan: Mayhem and Music Boxes Bring Loot



Left: Army teams wearing their moisture wicking shirts and drinking from their mugs from their Q4 boxes. From one handler: "Please thank everyone for the last packages! We really appreciate and enjoy them. The coffee was perfect. The guys were wearing the shirts right away, so I know they like them. The caps are also very nice. I was saying to myself the morning we got the box, 'I wish I had a mug for my oatmeal.' and BAM, it showed up!"

Below: Air Force teams showcase some of their care package goodies on a standard team pose. Some great looking dogs you have there, guys. Thanks for the awesome photos. Enjoy your goodies.



Above left: MWD Nninja and handler show off the new MWD TSA shirt.



Right: Meet MWD Gina who was reportedly head over heels in love with her new KONG Stick. Gina posing with the spoils of her care package.

Thanks again to everyone who helped get these boxes filled to the brim with love and loot out to the dog teams deployed around the world.



Keesler AFB: Mighty Mississippi Base

Story and photos by D. G. Whitman

For MWD TSA volunteers, nothing much is better than the opportunity to visit a base in person and have a chance to meet and greet dog teams, bring a few items to share and watch the dogs and handler enjoying their new gifts.

We recently had that opportunity with the 81st SFS (Security Forces Squadron) on beautiful Keesler Air Force Base along the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Just minutes from the famed Biloxi casinos, Keesler AFB is home to the 81st Training Squadron and is responsible for nearly 500 training courses. On an average day, Keesler trains between 4,500 and 5,000 students. In addition to training pilots, one of their biggest roles is to train medical personnel in their specific specialties. The Keesler training hospital is one of the reasons this base was not closed down after Hurricane Katrina's relentless damage.

Right: Kennel Master, Martin, joins us for a cup of coffee. MWD TSA was thrilled to be able to share coffee pods with this kennel thanks to a gracious donation from the San Francisco Bay Gourmet Coffee Co.

Below: MWD Mmaura V513 shows excitement and animation in anticipation of playing with her new toys. MWD TSA provided Chuck It Launchers and some replacement balls to change up the toy "paycheck".



Keesler continued on page 13



Keesler continued from page 12



Left: Sgt. Herron and his MWD pose for a quick photo. We had a few of our gorgeous tropical inspired bandannas left over from the 2nd Quarter care packages and they fit right in with the Gulf Coast setting at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Below: The Kennel Master, Martin, and the trainer, Hays, demonstrate canine CPR on a dummy dog. It's nice to know that they all receive very detailed training in canine emergency medicines, especially in this warm climate.



Left: Artwork featured on the kennel walls was created by Security Forces individuals with a talent for painting. The paw in the background is completed with the Air Force K9 shield and the head of a Belgian malinois and a German shepherd dog.



On the morning of our visit, officers were busy working roadways so we had a small cadre of staff and handlers to welcome us, however, we received a truly warm welcome, a dynamic tour of the facility and kennels.

Our time was very limited and did not allow us the opportunity to take the group out to lunch or watch a demonstration, however, we made up for it with the coffee and breakfast along with a few other gifts.

I'm not sure who was more excited, the staff with the coffee or MWD Mmaura with the Chuck It balls. It may be a toss up.

The staff is rightfully proud of their operation and the comeback made by this base after Hurricane Katrina. They shared some of the history of the base along with some of the damages that incurred here during the storm. While New Orleans received the lion's share of the news coverage, many small towns along the Missis-

sippi Gulf Coast were obliterated by hurricane force winds that came ashore in Hurricane Katrina's lethal northeast quadrant sweeping a thirty-foot storm surge through seventy-five miles of unprotected cities. Biloxi and Keesler AFB were not spared. While much of the damage is still seen in scarred trees and vacant lots, the coast is beautiful and is making a comeback. We loved it and hope to make another visit some day soon.

Sit. Stay. Support.

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MWD TSA is committed to ethics in everything we do. We are honored to be among the select few non-profit organizations to receive the GuideStar Gold Participant seal.

All of our volunteers sign a code of ethics which outlines how we do our business. We are committed to transparency, but also handle the monies and goods you donate with efficiency, respect and appreciation.

Our missions include supporting active duty dogs and handlers, veteran dog handler causes and events, and war dog memorials where handlers can gather to remember, recognize and heal. We offer educational opportunities for the general public and advocate on behalf of retired military working dogs. Please support us!

Kennel Talk is the proud recipient of multiple
GSDCA Special Newsletter Awards!



We invite you to join the ever-growing MWD TSA family!

To learn, volunteer, engage or subscribe, click here for info:

<http://mwdtsa.org/mwdtsa-one-click.html>

From the Archives



Chow Horn

A story from Nathan Aaron:

In 1970 in the Highlands of Nam, Scout Dog Rex was walking point on patrol. He reared up and howled like a wolf.

My shot-gun Grunt said, "What kind of alert is that?"

I looked at my watch and it was 12:00 noon when they blew the chow horn back at the Anke Base so, I told him it was the lunch time alert. We could not hear the horn in the boonies, but Rex could.

(Photo of Rex, courtesy of Nathan Aaron, Vietnam Scout Dog Handler)