

March 2015
Award Winning
Monthly Newsletter

Volume 7, Issue 3

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MWDTSA touches the lives
of dogs and people near
and far. This month, our
Kennel Talk articles once
again reach from coast to
coast and across the
world; from Kosovo to
California, with stops in
Virginia, Georgia, Colorado
and Alaska.

Subscribe to see where we
connect next month!

Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

MWDTSA KENNEL TALK

Pfc. Cindy Ortiz, a military working dog handler with the 100th Military Working Dog Detachment stationed out of Miesau, Germany and her partner Spc. Hundi, an explosive detection working dog during hoist evacuation training at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, Jan. 28. The Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) team with Multinational Battle Group-East, conducted hoist evacuation training with two U.S. and one Ukrainian Army working dogs and their handlers.



K9 Hoist Training

Story and photos by Ardian Nrecaj
Multinational Battle Group East, Public Affairs Specialist

CAMP BONDSTEEL, Kosovo – The loud sounds and the high winds of the helicopter blades spinning are enough to frighten the average dog, but for the Military Working Dog, climbing inside of the bird is just another day on the job.

The Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) team with Multinational Battle Group-East, conducted hoist evacuation training with two U.S. and one Ukrainian Army working dogs and their handlers, at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, Jan. 28.

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Doug Schletz, first sergeant with F Company (MEDEVAC), 5th Battalion (General Support), 159th Aviation Regiment, U.S. Army Reserves, based out of Clearwater, Florida and a native of Denver, explained that the reason for the exercise is to get the MWD and their handlers familiar with the aircraft.

"This kind of training is important in case the military working dog or their handlers are injured or wounded and they need a medical evacuation," said Schletz.

K9 Hoist Training continued on page 2

U.S. Army Sgt. Earl Thomas, a MWD handler, with 525th Military Police Detachment out of Wiesbaden, Germany, said that the first thing they did was get the dogs warmed up to the aircraft.

"First we had the dogs go around the helicopter while it was still on the ground and once the dog got familiarized with the noise and helicopter, we did the hoist," said Thomas.

The helicopter landed and both of the dogs and their handlers were, hoisted one-by-one, 75 feet into the air. The training mission was a great success according to Thomas.

"Lex is a pro," said Thomas of his working dog. "Lex and I have done this training four times prior to today, so he knew and he reacted just the way I thought he would. The other dogs did very well for this being their first time."

This training is important for both the dogs and the handlers.

"If we are in a real world scenario and we do have to MEDEVAC an area, this training teaches us how to hoist the dog up and to know what to expect from the dog," said Thomas. "We don't want the dog's first experience in an aircraft hoist to be a real world situation. It's also good for the handlers to get hoisted up with the dog. It is good to be prepared for anything that could come our way."

This was the first hoist training for the MEDEVAC team and the handlers since they arrived in Kosovo.

"The training went great today," said Schletz. "The dogs seemed to love it. They got comfortable with the helicopter."

The MEDEVAC team and the K-9 handlers will do the training again in the spring.



Above: Staff Sgt. Lex, an explosive detection working dog, waits for the hoist evacuation training to start at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, Jan. 28. Staff Sgt. Lex is the partner of Sgt. Earl Thomas, a military working dog handler, with the 525th Military Police Detachment (Military Working Dogs) out of Wiesbaden, Germany. They are currently assigned to Multinational Battle Group-East as part of Kosovo Force 19.



Right: Pfc. Cindy Ortiz and Staff Sgt. Doug Schletz, first sergeant of the MEDEVAC team, prepare Spc. Hundi.



Left: Sgt. Oleksandr Iliev, a Ukrainian army military working dog handler, with his partner, Lars, an explosive detection dog, during the hoist evacuation training.

A Night at the Movies - 1st Quarter Care Packages

By Jan Slotar

I was born in Hollywood, Calif., so it was natural that the theme I chose for our 1st Quarter care packages was "A Night at the Movies". It was a fun theme, and I met some really nice people in my quest for care package donations and packing partners.

One of my first calls was to the Stuntmen's Association of Motion Pictures, in Hollywood, Calif., a request for a donation of t-shirts featured on their website. I got a call back from Mark Donaldson, the President of S.A.M.P., who told me they would be happy to donate t-shirts, but instead of their standard t-shirts, one of their members had designed a custom t-shirt for our awesome handlers. It was amazing. I can't thank them enough for what they did. Mark and members of S.A.M.P., you Rock!!!

The contents of the care packages were fun to assemble, and the donations celebrated our southern California movie heritage, starting with movie candy for the handlers, and Newman's Own Snack Sticks for the dogs, both donated by Dr. Elizabeth Barr, owner of Animal Hospital of Thousand Oaks, in Thousand Oaks Calif., her staff, and their wonderful clients. Donations of additional goodies included chocolate and yogurt covered pistachios, donated by ProNutz, Canoga Park, Calif., coffee donated by Caribou Coffee, Atlanta Georgia, Australian Licorice, hot chocolate, gold star and paw print bags to be used as "swag bags", donated by Nashville Wraps, Hendersonville, Tenn. More food? Of course, what is a movie without popcorn? Through the generosity of an anonymous donor, we also had cones of popcorn. Our amazing partners, D.O.G. Bakery, Traverse City, Mich., crafted some custom made dog cookies with "Stars" and "Movie Tickets", dog food samples were donated by Natural Balance Pet Foods, Burbank, Calif., Indigo Smokehouse Strips were donated by PetSafe,, Plainfield, Indiana, and Smart n' Tasty dog dental treats were gifted to us by a wonderful new partner store, Petropolis, in Camarillo, Calif.

To round out the packages, we included EarthBath Grooming Wipes and KONGs for the dogs, from our KONGs for K9's drive. We also included a couple of fun items in support of the movie theme: movie reel playing cards, directors clapboard key chains, and a travel coffee mug. We added one last surprise. In addition to the Stuntmen's Tshirt, we also included our MWD TSA "Defenders of Freedom" t-shirt. And, I also included a Movie Trivia quiz, (and answers, with instructions - no peeking!).

Two Hollywood German Shepherd heroes, Strongheart and Rin-Tin-Tin, were the basis for the MWD TSA t-shirt we designed, "Defenders of Freedom". Our t-shirt is based on old movie posters of these early canine stars.

Below Left: Strongheart was the screen name of Etzel von Oeringen, a German Shepherd Dog. His star's location is at 1724 Vine Street, Hollywood, Calif.; the star ceremony took place on February 8, 1960.

Below Right: Rin-Tin-Tin, "Rinty", a German Shepherd Dog, has a star at 1627 Vine Street, Hollywood, Calif.; the star ceremony was February 8, 1960.



Above: The MWD TSA t-shirt we designed and included in the packages.

Below: The t-shirt specially designed for MWD TSA by the Stuntmen's Association of Motion Pictures for inclusion in the packages.



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A Night AT The Movies continued from page 3

Strongheart was a former police dog in Germany, and Rin-Tin-Tin was rescued from a bombed-out dog kennel in France, close to the end of WWI. If you ever visit Hollywood, Strongheart's star is located at 1724 Vine Street, and Rin-Tin-Tin's star is located at 1627 Vine Street.

Santa Susana High School in Simi Valley, Calif., which has a Performing Arts program, was the location of the packing event. Not only did Principal Mayea graciously donate the use of their multi-purpose room to set up and pack, on Friday, January 30, and Saturday, January 31, 2015, but some of the teachers and students volunteered to help out on Saturday.

All of the items were staged on Friday evening, and the packing was done in about two and a half hours on Saturday morning. We even had time to get everything mailed out that same day!

I would like to thank the following people who volunteered: Jodi, Tracy, Makayla, Edith, Anna, Monika, Scarlett, Makena, MWDTSA volunteer Lindsay, Ben, Liz, Grace, Jessica, Mitchell, Robert, Garrett, Kristen, teachers and students of Santa Susana High School, with a special thank you to Girl Scout Troop #8401, who also donated \$300 to MWDTSA which helped to offset some of our shipping costs.

Top Right: Girl Scout Troop #8401, La Cresenta, Calif . From L to R) Emily, Kira, Tracy, Ella, Anna, Cambria, and Leader LeAnna, with a check for \$300 for MWDTSA.

Right: Teachers and students of Santa Susana High School.

Below: Santa Rosa Valley 4-H Club. Back Row, L to R: 4-H Leader Monica, 4-H members Anna, Jessica, Kristen. Front Row: Scarlett, Robert, Garrett, Mitchell, Grace, 4-H Leader Liz, and Makena



Items in the care packages included: 'Movie Candy', Snack Sticks, Dog Dental Treats and Caribou Coffee.

A Night AT The Movies continued on page 5

A Night At The Movies continued from page 4



Left: MWD TSA Volunteer Jodi Slotar on left with Santa Susana teachers set up boxes.

Below: Ready for the post office. From L to R: Scarlett, Anna, Edith, Jan, Monika and Makena.



Left: MWD TSA Volunteer Lindsay Shaw and her husband, Ben Shaw, worked hard filling the care packages with A Night At The Movies themed goodies for the MWD handlers and their canine partners.



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:

Asbury Class-Bethany United Methodist Church, Smyrna, Ga.

Susan Bischoff

Stanton Bost

Renetta Burlage

Jeanne Dedrick

Girl Scout Troop #8401, La Crescenta, Calif.

Hardcore Luchador Comics, Tampa, Fla.

Janine Johnson

Richard Kenny

Beth Lord

Laurie Newton

Petropolis, Camarillo, Calif.

PetSafe, Plainfield, Ind.

Stephen Redden

Kristen San Antonio

Santa Susana High School Teachers, Simi Valley, Calif.

Jan Slotar

"Southern Comfort" IDEXX Sales Team, Westbrook, Md.

Julie Sydenstricker

Kathy Woodring

A Night At The Movies continued on page 6

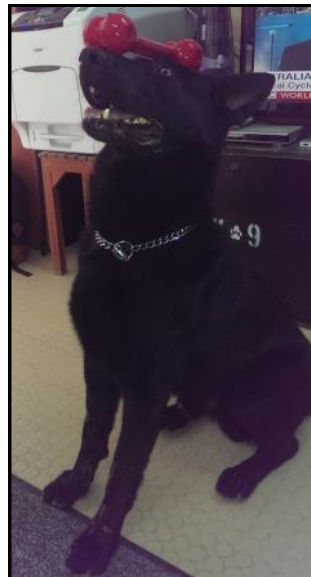
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A Night At The Movies continued from page 5



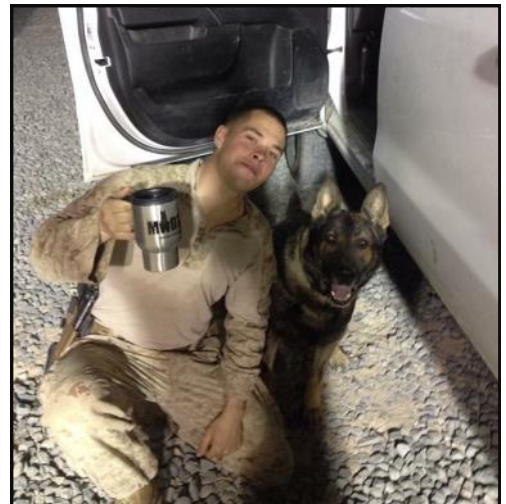
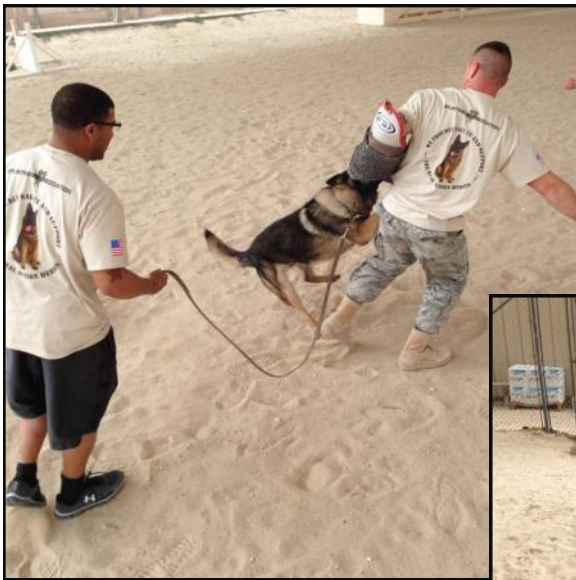
Above: The care packages were filled with a cornucopia of goodies, including: KONGS, Natural Balance dog food samples, Indigo Smokehouse Strips, Earthbath Grooming wipes, Popcorn cones, Movie Ticket and Movie Star dog cookies designed and made just for MWD TSA specifically for the care packages by D.O.G. Bakery, gold star and paw print decorated 'swag bags', ProNutz yogurt and chocolate covered pistachios, Australian Licorice and MWD TSA travel mugs paired with hot chocolate mix packets.

Once all the packages have been sent out, MWD TSA hopes for photos from the recipients, so that we can share them with you. MWD TSA would not be able to send out these quarterly care packages without the generosity of our donors, whether corporate, small business, an organization or an individual. A big 'Thank You' to all our donors. Please enjoy these photos from downrange on this, and the next, page. (The Stuntmen's Association T-Shirts seemed to be a big hit.)



A Night At The Movies continued on page 7

A Night At The Movies continued from page 6



One Team: One Year

By Dixie Whitman



MWD TSA first met Dan Jackson and Bbailey at an MWD TSA Military Dog Handler Day event. When we found they had deployed to Afghanistan, we started our support. The double "B" means Bbailey was born into the Puppy Program at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, TX.

MWD TSA sends approximately 125-150 boxes of care packages to military working dog teams on a quarterly basis. We thought our readers might like to see, from the perspective of one dog team, what that support might look like.

We first met Dan and Bbailey at an event that MWD TSA coordinated with the Governor's office in Atlanta. It was a great opportunity to really have the chance to meet and talk with handlers and get to know a bit more about them. We provided lunch, KONG toys, a T shirt and some other goodies to participants of that day.

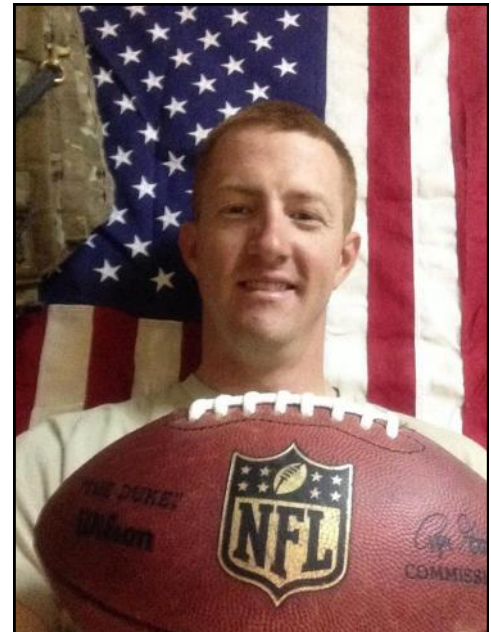
After learning that this team had deployed, we connected with Dan, asked if there was anything needed and then sent a package with some toys, treats and grooming wipes to get them started.

Over the course of the year, we sent three additional quarterly packages and one special award football package, the result of a random drawing.

These care packages bring a sense of "back home" and light-hearted fun. The first box

Right: Dan Jackson was also the lucky recipient of one of MWD TSA's Super Bowl Special Boxes. We received 17 official NFL footballs for our Super Bowl in Box Care Packages. From all of the teams we supported that quarter, 17 names were drawn to receive these official footballs.

In a communication with MWD TSA, Dan said: "I have appreciated everything you have done for us while we have been deployed and we are both, Bbailey and I, looking forward to being home soon. Again, thank you for all that your organization does and it will not be forgotten."



One Team One Year continued from page 8

Below: Dan made some special requests which were sent, along with another KONG, toys, treats and grooming wipes, to get him started.

Right: 2nd Quarter Care package, themed "Gone Fishin'" included snacks, quality socks, grooming items, food treats for both Dan and Bbailey and a drink-mix filled mug.



Above: The 4th quarter boxes were packed by Veteran Combat Trackers and since it was packed in Louisiana, included a lot of tasty foods, including Louisiana's famous Community Coffee, hot sauce and more.

Below: Bbailey poses with Super Bowl In-A-Box care package wearing the Super Bowl XLVIII hat shared with us by the NFL. A toy football, football book, Do-It-Yourself Nacho kit, treats and Energy Gummi Bears among many other items.

received was themed "Veteran Support" and was packed at a reunion of Vietnam Veteran Combat Trackers in Lake Charles, Louisiana. In addition to the MWD TSA Calendar which was dedicated to Vietnam Veterans, we also included items from Louisiana. Some great soups, food mixes, a mug, dog snacks and Thorlos socks were among the many items included.

The first quarter box was a fun box to help the teams celebrate Super Bowl XLVIII. We included items to wear, to throw, to eat and to read. Popcorn, nachos, peanuts and just about any kind of Super Bowl snack food was included. The highlight of this box was getting the NFL to send us their hats before they were released to the general public. Having to sit on that great design was hard, but we promised no photos until the Super Bowl.

The last box sent to Bbailey and Dan was themed "Gone Fishin'" and was coordinated by our Board Member, Allison Merrill and featured not only fish themed items, but also highlighted her local area near Lake Michigan. We had donations of great grooming items for the dogs and cherry flavored items as Traverse City is the world cherry capitol.

Of course, these are just a few quarters in years and years of sending packages. Since then, we've included packages centered around NAS-CAR, Howl-O-Ween and Movies. And, we will continue with great themes already planned and working for the rest of the year.

MWD TSA continues to send support to deployed teams from all branches of service. Our boxes include care and comfort, health and home, grooming and games, toys and treats and so much more. We appreciate the support from so many of you who allow us to continue to do what we do, which is making sure that the teams working now know that America has their back and that never again will one generation of veterans be forgotten by another.

Please join us for our next care packing drive.



Today I Adopted A Military Working Dog

By Robert J. Black

January 12, 2013: Today I adopted a military working dog. This dog has had a full career, but due to old age and cataracts he is deemed no longer fit to perform his military duties. Note that I stated, "duties" and not "obligations". He was not obligated to take on military life nor did he volunteer, but his character and drive made him suited for this life and he accepted it.

He could have faltered like thousands before him during initial training and enjoyed a duty free life, spending time barking at neighbors, being kicked off the furniture and anxiously waiting at the door for his owner to take him for a walk. Instead, unbeknownst to him, he stuck to his true self and became a military working dog. He trained and became a certified patrol-explosive detector dog; the most hazardous position of any MWD. He has seen combat and he has been in situations from which most people would have run. Yes, he was unaware of the environment he

was in, and yes, he was unaware of the potential dangers that could have befallen him, but performed as he was trained despite his feeling of unease. He has done it through his many years in the military and that makes him one of the lucky ones, never faltering through situations, never failing due to bad health or bad days. He is a lucky dog...a dog given a full life with hours of intensive training or, in his eyes, hours of play, long cold days and nights walking perimeters and pushing himself to near exhaustion. Now able to retire and relax in his golden years to see what he has missed by having the strong characteristics of a military working dog.

I adopted him, not so much for him as much as my selfish human ways. I wanted to be able to reminisce about the many memories I was lucky to have being a handler, trainer and kennel master and attempt to pay back all the dogs I worked, and worked with, for giving me a career and lifestyle others will never know. I owe

it to all the dogs I worked but unfortunately unable to do so, due to moving, due to financial and military obligations and due to the many years my dogs had still left to give. Luckily I am able to give it to one dog for all the dogs I worked.

Today I adopted a military working dog on behalf of Neil, Pete, Marco, Mike, Ron, Zorro, Aron, Khan and Valco, some short term and some as long as three years. Today I am able to pay them back, in a small way; by giving a home to one that was lucky enough to finish and allow me to say thank you and that makes me one of the lucky ones, as well.

So when we walk down the street together, we will share a bond stronger than any household pet for we have been through Hell and back and understand how lucky we are. And the smell of the fresh air to us will be sweeter than to any other owner or dog that passes us by.



Sany in 2014 in Alaska.

Today I Adopted continued from page 10

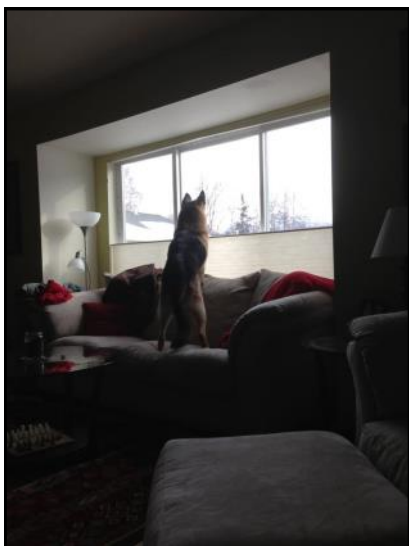


Photos of Robert and Sany:

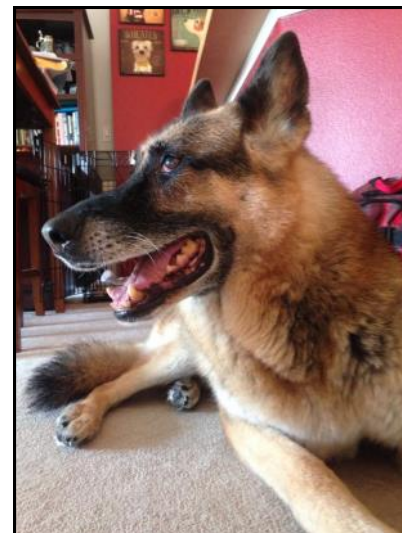
Top Row (left to right): On deployment, in retirement where Sany proved that "he with the most toys wins",

Row Two: Left/Right: Sany sleeping with a ball in his mouth, riding with his nose out of the window

Bottom left/right: looking out at his new world and being a house dog.



January 27, 2015: It's with great sadness that on Wednesday at 1500, we will be putting retired MWD Sany F464 down. After two years of retirement, his hips and hind legs can no longer support him. After a month of deterioration and two weeks unable to get up without assistance it has been decided to unburden him from his pain. He was a great coworker, friend and family member and he continued to make me proud...



Prince's Story: Veteran's Quest Has a Happy Ending

[Editor's note: It's not every day that the story of a wartime partnership that began in Vietnam in 1969 takes twists and turns and has a happy ending in Minnesota more than 40 years later, but such is the tale of Ed Reeves and his beloved MWD, Prince.

Prince was Ed's scout dog for two years, during which Prince saved Ed's life multiple times by alerting him to danger and preventing him from stepping on land mines. But after Ed returned home he was not able to find out what had happened to Prince. After years of searching, using faded photographs and following decades-old leads, Ed confirmed that Prince had continued his service in Vietnam before joining the Customs Department as a drug sniffing dog. Ed's journey and stories about his wartime adventures with Prince were written up in The Mille Lacs County Times newspaper in 2011. The article ended with Ed's hopes that he could someday learn more about Prince's later years.

Little did Ed know that there were more details still to be uncovered about Prince's continued service to his country after joining the Customs Department. Here, in Ed's own words, is the final chapter of his quest to learn more about Prince's experiences and the lives he touched along the way. This article was originally published November 5, 2014 in The Mille Lacs County Times. It is reprinted here with permission and has been edited for length.]

After a story ran in the Mille Lacs County Times in June 2011 regarding my search for Scout dog Prince, I asked Keith Mueller whose father had originally donated Prince to the military if we could visit and exchange more stories about Prince and he said, "Anytime."

On Sept. 13, 2014, my wife Debbie and I made the trip from Grove City, Ohio, to Milaca [Minnesota] for our visit. When we got to Keith's house, we met his wife Joyce, daughter Connie, his niece Teri Henderson and her husband Ron. They all knew Prince from when they would visit.

After a great dinner, we started talking about Prince for about the next four hours. At this time Keith told me his dad was contacted two times by the military about Prince and that he thought the letter might be with his dad's things in his sister's house, and when she returned from Florida they would look for it. In mid-October, when I got home, there was a message on the answering machine from Keith saying he found it and to call him. It was kind of late, but I couldn't wait to find out what it was. Fortunately there's an hour difference in time. So I called him. He said he had a picture of Prince taken in 1977. On the back was an address label. It said Donald Jensen, Bonita, California, taken Sept. 2, 1977.

That started me on another search for what happened to Prince. I tried several different searches to find out anything about Donald Jensen but didn't have much luck. Then I decided to try the Customs Department. I tried them back in 2007 when I found out Prince got to come home in 1973. They told me at that time they didn't have information on dogs before 1977. I looked up their website and found it had been updated and they had a section on their K-9 program. There was a number to call, so I called it, but it was busy. While I was trying to get through, I found another number for the customs office in San Clemente, California. I called it. I explained to the supervisor what I was looking for and I was trying to call the K-9 center, but it was busy. We talked for a while about dogs; he was a former dog handler with the Border Patrol. Then he said he thought he had another num-



Prince and Ed Reeves are pictured getting ready to go to the field. Photo provided

ber to call in Front Royal, Virginia. That's the main training center for dogs used by Customs. When I called the number, I was told the person that handles the history of the K-9s just went home for the day. They gave me her name and said to call back tomorrow. I called her the next morning and explained to her what I was looking for. She said she checked the files and said they didn't have much on the dogs at that time, but she knew of a retired handler. I gave her my email address for contacting me if she found out anything.

Prince's Story continued from page 11

That afternoon she emailed me the handler's name (Ron) and email address and said he worked with a dog named Prince and that he was waiting for me to contact him. I sent him an email with a picture of Prince and I, along with my phone number. He called me right away and we talked about an hour. He was in at the beginning (1973) of Customs using dogs and that they got most of them from Lackland AFB, which is where the information about Prince coming home had originated. He said that the Prince he worked with was not mine. I then told him about the picture of Prince that Keith sent me. When I told him that it was from Donald Jensen, he said he knew him. He and his wife owned the kennels that housed the dogs for Customs. When we were done I "Googled" Jensen Kennel and I got their number.

The address on the website was the same as the one on the picture taken in 1977. I called. A lady (Georjean Jensen) answered and I explained what I was looking for. I told her the name of the agent I had talked to and she said she knew him. I went on to tell her about the picture that was taken in 1977. I told her I was looking for information on Prince. What she said next was something I never expected.

She said she knew Prince well; they took care of the Customs dogs for a long time. She said she took that picture of Prince when he retired from customs. I was as overwhelmed then as I am now writing this.

She told me the name of the last agent (Jerry) that Prince worked with. We exchanged numbers and I said I would send her some pictures of Prince and I. I called Ron back after I settled down and told him what I found out. He couldn't believe it either. What is even better is that when I told him the name of the last agent to work with Prince (Jerry), he said he knew Jerry and that he would call him. I told him to give him my number and call when he could. The next day Jerry called me. We talked for over an hour about Prince and the job he did for me and the job he did for Customs. I called Georjean Jensen back the other day and found out that Prince passed away in 1983 and he is buried on the kennel property in Bonita, California.

This is happy ending for me. Until 2007 I thought Prince was left in Vietnam. Back then the dogs were treated as equipment; they were turned over to the South Vietnam Army or euthanized. I want to thank Leonard and Keith Mueller. Their dog got me home!

RIP

PRINCE

07-15-1968/07-20-1983



Above: This is my dog Prince taken in 1977 when he retired from Customs as a narcotics dog. He was adopted by the kennel that boarded the dogs from Customs in Bonita California where he lived out the rest of his life. He passed away in 1983 at the age of 15 years old.



Above: (L to R) My wife Debbie, Teri, me Keith and Joyce. Keith bought Prince for his Dad to use on the farm in 1968. Teri is Keith's niece and played with Prince as a puppy and up until Keith's Dad donated Prince to the military. Joyce is Keith's wife and knew Prince during that time. My wife and I made a trip to Milica Minnesota to visit them in Sept 2014. The picture of Prince taken in 1977 was sent to Keith's Dad by the people from Bonita Calif. who adopted Prince.

Homecoming

by Michael Hurder

Hospital PJs, robe, funky blue slippers and all, I approached the door to the world. I had dreamt of this day for the past 14 nights while traversing half the world on medevac flights home. It was May of '72 and we finally landed. I was pumped. Well, as pumped as I could be. Head was still wrapped, left arm in a sling and I still couldn't feel it, but heck, I was home and I swear that was a blonde nurse walking up to the rolling stairway, down which we would return to sanity. God did I ever love the USA. Agonizing wait finally over, the jet's door cracks open. The sun streams in a welcome I couldn't have imagined a couple of weeks earlier in my best fantasies.

The engine is still spooling down so I can't hear a lot, but I think I can hear a susurrus of voices in the background, and my curiosity is piqued. We were told in no uncertain terms to not expect any kind of welcome home greetings from anyone. We were told, in fact; don't give away your identity until you look more like them. Wait 'til your hair grows back and try not to say things like "How you gonna act?" or "Back in the world" or "F(orget) it, it don't mean nothin'". Above all, don't wear your uniform.

I peeked outside to see what was up. Through squinted vision I saw them, arms waving, signs floating, fists pumping. I am in a sun-baked daze and continue on my resolute path to freedom...just down these stairs. I can't make out the words but they are all chanting from the other side of a fence. They look really...mad. Crazy? I'm crouched and looking for a weapon when the projectiles fly. In shock with a heartbeat that would have cost me my life two weeks before, I finally react and cover. The guys behind me on the stairs are carrying an amputee. They can't duck. They try to cover him as best they can but one bag of dog crap got through. I still dream of jumping up just in time to save him from that humiliation...but in reality I

didn't do that.

Six of us went to civilian jail that day. The protesters went home or to the hospital. Days later I finally arranged a ride home with another soldier's family who lived in the next state. My family, who all lived in the area, was busy I guess. When I got home I was greeted with..."Well, you couldn't do that right either. Could you?" I moved to the Boston Common and lived on a bench for six months, 'til the VA came and dragged me to the hospital after passers-by who recognized the fatigues called them. They reported that I stunk. Apart from the staunch support of my loving wife De, the only homecoming I can say I enjoyed came in 1989 when I finally worked up the courage to visit the Wall and a teenage stranger gave me hug, said "Thank you" and welcomed me home.



Above: Michael's tunic with patch.

Right: His 'buds'.



Above: Michael Hurder, Veteran's Day 2014



Other Side of the Lens: Marine Leaves Lasting Impact

by Staff Sgt. Nicholas Rau
460 Space Wing Public Affairs

5/22/2013 - BUCKLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. -- I had never met him. I had never seen him. I didn't even know his name before that day.

But then I stood on the flightline staring at a black coffin draped in the Stars and Stripes. It didn't matter whether or not I knew this Marine, because I could feel his impact.

Members of the base and local community showed up for this dignified transfer in force. A full formation of Marines divided the hearse from the series of cars that lined the aircraft hangar doors, with an honor guard ready to receive their fallen brother after he arrived by plane. More than 20 K-9 handlers and their dogs filled the flightline in respect of one of their own because the plane was not only carrying an American warrior, but also the remains of his military working dog partner.

So there I was, in full service dress, behind the camera's lens, capturing the final journey of this Marine for his family. I had never been in this position before, and it was a little eerie. As a photojournalist, I always try to get excited about putting out the best possible product; but as I stood next to the hearse, still close enough to hear the quiet crying of his family, excitement seemed out of place.

The six-man honor guard raised their white-gloved hands in a silent salute to the K-9 handler before the door to the black hearse closed. The Marine's wife stared at the vehicle through dark sunglasses, the tear streaks still on her cheek. His brother stood stoically beside her in his place.

This Marine, who was unknown to me until then, had spoken to me. Not through words, but through actions. He made the great-

est sacrifice for his country any service member can make. He made it even though he had a family. He made it even though he had a future.

All the days throughout my career I complained about it being too hot or there being a lot of work seemed insignificant. Frankly, I was embarrassed. I lost track of the big picture in those moments, and it was sad it took a hero to remind me of that.

The corporal's sacrifice reminded me of the important things. No matter what branch of service we are in, we are all in this fight together. We stand united against America's enemies and together in the aid of our allies.

His sacrifice also showed me how fragile life is for those who take the oath to serve our country. We sometimes see ourselves as invincible, but one day it could be me in that casket and my wife wearing black. Because I will deploy again; it's what I swore to when I joined the military.

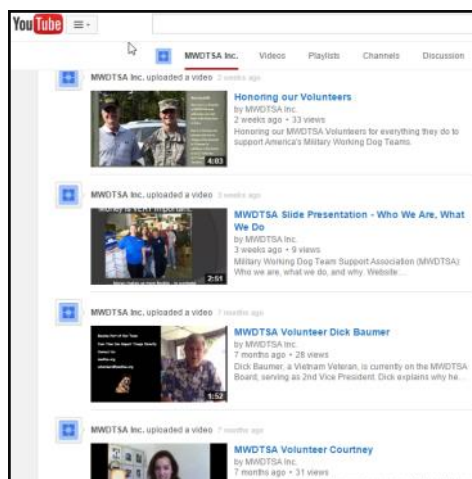
As I watched the hearse pull away bathed by the lights of fire trucks and police vehicles, every available service member and civilian on the installation lined the road awaiting the corporal's final pass. I saw hundreds of base members, lined shoulder to shoulder, place their hands over their hearts or raise their arms and render a final salute.

And it hit me. This Marine not only impacted me, he had impacted all of us.

MWDTSA YouTube Channel

MWDTSA have posted six videos on our new MWDTSA YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/mwdtsa>.

These videos contain information about MWDTSA, our volunteers, and our Military Working Dog Teams.



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K9 Veterans Day March 13th

Joe White of Jacksonville, Florida initiated the effort for a national recognition of K9 Veterans Day. His goal was to ensure that the lives and service of our K9 Veterans was honored yearly each March 13th. That date was selected because the United States Canine Corps was established on March 13, 1942.

Joe was a scout dog handler with the 47th Scout Dog Platoon, serving in Vietnam alongside his partner, Ebony, a solid black female German shepherd dog.

As a way to honor our military K9s, MWDTSA has created several events this year to celebrate this legacy. One of those was to invite all handlers or adopters to submit a copy of a favorite photo of their K9s to be included in a digital scrapbook. We plan to have this accessible for everyone to see on our website: mwdtisa.org.

Please join us on March 13th to honor United States Military Working Dogs.

