

May 2015  
Award Winning  
Monthly Newsletter

Volume 7, Issue 5

[www.mwdtsa.org](http://www.mwdtsa.org)

Support MWDTSa now  
and you won't miss any of  
the photos, stories, news  
and highlights of 2015!

Kennel Talk is an award  
winning MWD publication!

### Inside this issue:

Memorial Day	1
Traditions of Excellence	3
Military Kennel Building Named in Honor	6
Rare Bird Fundraiser	7
2nd Qtr Care Packages	8
Cajun Pt 2	9
One More Day	11
Mississippi State Vet School Hosts Training	12
43 Years and a Wake-Up	14
Wings of Wonder	14
Wildlife Prairie Park War Dog Memorial	15
From the Archives	16

MWDTSa touches the lives  
of dogs and people near  
and far. This month, our  
Kennel Talk articles once  
again reach across the US:  
from North Carolina to  
Mississippi, Texas,  
Illinois, Michigan, and  
Colorado.

Subscribe to see where we  
connect next month!

## Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

### MWDTSa KENNEL TALK



**Roses and flags adorn headstones at Arlington National Cemetery, Va., for Memorial Day 2014. (Department of Defense photo by EJ Hersom)**

## Memorial Day

In the US, we have two days dedicated to honoring our military. Veterans Day, always celebrated on November 11, is the day we honor all who have served in any branch of our military, whether in wartime or peace. Memorial Day, celebrated on the last Monday in May, is when we pay tribute to those who died whilst serving, particularly those who died in battle or from wounds sustained in conflict.

Memorial Day was formerly known as Decoration Day, and was to commemorate those Union and Confederate soldiers who died in the Civil War. The day was celebrated on May 30th, which was chosen as the best date for flowers to be available to decorate the graves of the fallen.

The name gradually changed in popular parlance from Decoration Day to Memorial Day, the name being officially changed under Federal law in 1967. At this time, the date of the holiday was changed to the last Monday in May.

On Memorial Day, the flags of the United States are raised to the top of the staff, before being lowered to the half-staff position, where it remains until noon. This is to remember the men and women who gave their lives for their country. The flag-raising at noon symbolizes their memory being raised by the living, who vow not to let the sacrifices be in vain.

In keeping with the origins of the celebration, the graves of fallen service men and women all across the country are decorated with flags

Memorial Day continued from page 1

and flowers. The President of the United States traditionally lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery.

Each year for the past 40 years, approximately 1,200 members of the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard) have honored America's fallen heroes by placing American flags before the gravestones and niches of Service members buried at both Arlington National Cemetery and the U.S. Soldier's and Airmen's Home National Cemetery just prior to Memorial Day weekend. More than 260,000 gravestones and 7,300 niches are decorated. This tradition, known as "flags in," has been conducted annually since The Old Guard was designated as the Army's official ceremonial unit in 1948.



***Above: U.S. Army Sgt. Titus Fields, an infantryman with the Honor Guard Company, 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard), places an American flag in front of a grave stone in Arlington National Cemetery, Va., May 23, 2013. This tradition, known as "Flags In," has been conducted annually since The Old Guard was designated as the Army's official ceremonial unit in 1948. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jose A. Torres Jr./Released)***



***Above: An elderly veteran holds an American Flag during Memorial Day ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, Va., May 26, 2014. (Department of Defense photo by EJ Hersom)***

***Below: Marines and airmen stand at attention during Memorial Day ceremonies beside the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery, Va., May 26, 2014. (Department of Defense photo by EJ Hersom)***



## Tradition of Excellence

Story by Dixie Whitman

***The United States Marine Corps, with its fiercely proud tradition of excellence in combat, its hallowed rituals, and its unbending code of honor, is part of the fabric of American myth.***

Thomas E. Ricks; Making the Corps, 1997

It was our great honor to be able to share some time with the Marines of the II MEF and II PMO kennels aboard Marine Corps Base Camp LeJeune, NC on Thursday, March 26th. Representatives of MWD TSA created the kennel event as a day to show our appreciation. Also attending was a veteran Combat Tracker, Bob Hughes and his guest.

Attendees were given an opportunity to tour through the shining kennels, meet and greet some of the working dogs: PEDD (Patrol and Explosive), PDDD (Patrol and Narcotics), Combat Trackers and SSD (Specialized Search dogs), and with us, we brought a variety of toys for the dogs, T shirts for the dog handlers and had lunch brought in for the handlers and staff present.

Please enjoy some of our photos taken that day.

***Below: Bob Hughes, a visual tracker—part of the Combat Tracker Teams in Vietnam, poses with some of the Combat Trackers of Camp LeJeune.***

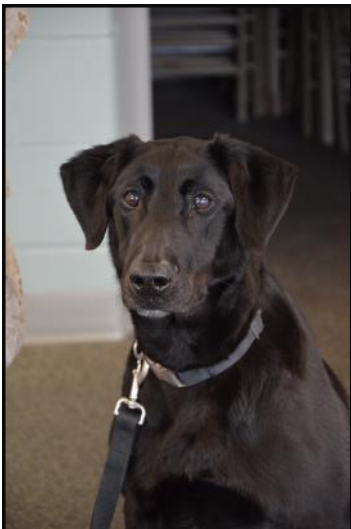


Tradition of Excellence continued on page 4

Tradition of Excellence continued from page 3



***Above: Handlers aboard Camp LeJeune pose with a photo of SSgt. Joshua Ashley, a kennelmate who was KIA in Afghanistan.***

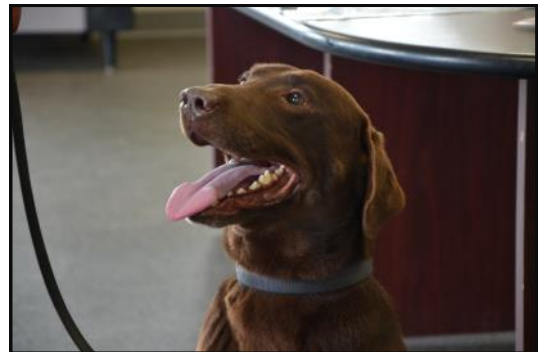


***Shown also (Left and Right) are great dogs representing all of the roles of a military working dog.***

***Top Right: Freddy, a GSD***



***Bottom Right: Grady, a lab***



***Left: Joe, a lab***

Tradition of Excellence continued on page 5

Tradition of Excellence continued from page 4



**Above (Left to Right): Handlers showing off their K9 partners. Rutledge and Brandy, Mayes and Falco, DiGregorio and Emily.**

**Right: Combat Trackers enjoy time spent swapping stories with Bob Hughes, a Visual Tracker from the Vietnam era Combat Tracker teams.**



**Bottom (Left and Right): Handlers enjoy the Jive Balls almost as much as, if not more than, their dogs, like Emily, on right.**



# Military Kennel Building Named in Honor of Sgt. Joshua R. Ashley

Story by Lance Cpl. Immanuel Johnson  
U.S. Marine Corps photos by Cpl. Krista James/Released



CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. - Close friends, family, and Marines who knew Sgt. Joshua Ashley came to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, March 27, 2015 to pay their respects to him while attending the commemorative naming of 2nd Law Enforcement Battalion's Military Working Dog Kennel Building, which was named in his honor.

Ashley was killed in action during combat operations while participating in Operation Enduring Freedom. Ashley was born on May 27, 1989 in Upland, California, to Jon and Tammie Ashley. Growing up, Joshua lived in both Fontana and Rancho Cucamonga, California, and graduated from Etiwanda High School. Joshua was a letterman in water polo and swimming, and played for the school's roller hockey team.

"I knew Sgt. Ashley when he came into the kennels," said Sgt. Eduardo Garcia, a squad leader with 2nd LEB, and native of Downey, California. "When Ashley left to kennel school, I left a week after so we attended school together and that's where the bonds started forming."

Ashley enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2008 and completed boot camp at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego on October 3, 2008. Following recruit training and Marine Combat Training he attended school to become a Military Policeman/Military Working Dog Handler. Ashley was first stationed

overseas for two years in Okinawa, Japan when he was a lance corporal.

"At first glance he was an intimidating guy," said Sgt. Kent Ferrell, a Military Working Dog Handler with 2nd LEB, and native of Bel Air, Maryland. "He's probably the most genuine person I've ever met in my life."

During his time in Okinawa Ashley was selected as Marine of the Quarter and subsequently Marine of the Year for Marine Corps Base Okinawa. Ashley was later transferred to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina in 2011.

"He led by example, there's no other perfect Marine that I know of," said Garcia. "He always stood up for his junior Marines no matter what."

Shortly after arriving at Camp Lejeune, Ashley was assigned his Military Working Dog, Sirius. In May 2012, Ashley and Sirius deployed to Afghanistan in support of Marine Special Operations Team 8132.

"Ashley was a true non-commissioned officer, a true leader," said Ferrell. "What happened to Ashley motivates me to be a better person and better handler."

Sergeant Ashley's personal awards include the Bronze Star with Combat Distinguishing Device, Purple Heart, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Marine

**Top: The Ashley family looks on as friends and colleagues of Sgt. Joshua Ashley speak at his commemorative service aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., March 27, 2015. Ashley first enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2008 to become a Military Working Dog Handler.**

**Above: United States Navy Chaplain Lt. Charles M. Wise, conducts the invocation during Sgt. Joshua Ashley's memorial service. During Ashley's time in Okinawa, Japan, he was selected as Marine of the Quarter and subsequently Marine of the Year.**

Kennel Named in Honor continued from page 5

Corps Good Conduct Medal, Rifle Expert Badge and Pistol Expert Badge.

"Even though he's gone, he's still leading the way," said Garcia. "Everybody that comes through that building will see his name. There's nobody else you can think of other than him."

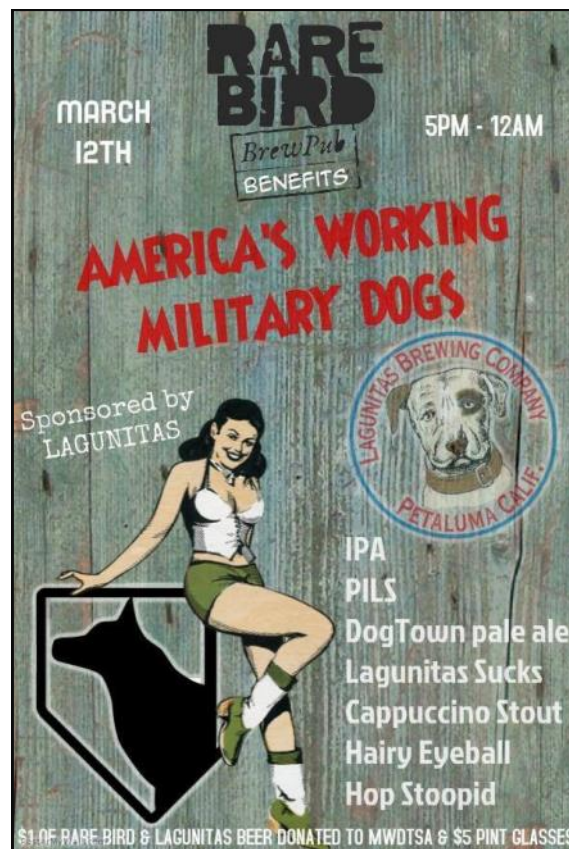
**Right: Sgt. Joshua Ashley's mother (Center) cuts the ribbon held by Lt Col. David Hyman aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., March 27, 2015. The cutting of the ribbon signifies the commemorative naming of 2nd Law Enforcement Battalion's Military Working Dog Kennel Building in honor of Ashley.**



## Rare Bird Brewery Fundraiser

To honor and raise awareness for K9 Veteran's Day, Rare Bird Brewery and Tap Room of Traverse City, Mich., held a fundraiser hosted by Allison Merrill, representing MWDTSA, on March 12, 2015. Lagunitas Brewery was also involved in the event. \$1 from each Rare Bird and Lagunitas Beer sold was donated to MWDTSA!

It was a great event, with around \$600 being raised. Allison Merrill spoke to attendees, educating them about Military Working Dogs and MWDTSA. Many people had no idea there was even a holiday for K9 Veteran's Day!



## Second Quarter Care Packages

**Included in our Second Quarter Care Packages are Pet Gators, Peach flavored Jelly Belly Jelly beans, Liver Treats, Collapsible Water Bowls, Louisiana Alligator Jerky Treats for dogs, Alligator Meat Sticks for handlers, Flamingo pops, T-shirts, hats, MWDTSA patches and much more.**

**The boxes should be fun and colorful with tastes representing the great states of Georgia and Florida.**



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:

**Zach Amato**  
American Legion Auxiliary, Chester Hawkins Post #290 ,  
Jetmore, Kan.

**Dick Baumer**  
Bonnier Corporation, Winter Park, Fla.

**Stanton Bost**  
Byrd's Cookie Company, Savannah, Ga.

**Christian Print Shop**, Alpharetta, GA

**Delca Corporation**, Laguna Niguel, Calif.

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

**Dog Style Boutique**, Bandon, Ore.

**Hardcore Luchador** - Angelo Gines, Jr. & Topher Steven, Tampa, Fla.

**Kyle Hartzinger**

**Suzanne Julian**

**Pamela Kendricks**

**Letters to Soldiers Club**, Maricopa, Ariz.

**Madra Mor Mud** - Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

**Morgan Stanley**, Atlanta, GA

**Laurie Newton**

**Outward Hound**, Centennial, Colo.

**Stephen Redden**

**Rosemont Middle School**, Student Body, La Crescenta, Calif.

**Teton Dog** - Park City, UT

**Thorlos** - Statesville, N.C.

**Christa Ursini**

**James Webb**

**Kathy Woodring**



## Cajun (Tattoo #001J) - Part 2 of 2

by Joe Quirarte

**[Editor's note: This month, we bring you the rest of Cajun's story, continued from the April newsletter. Cajun was a MWD in the explosive detection training program that showed great promise but was in danger of being euthanized due to his behavioral issues. The author saw Cajun's potential and could not accept this fate.]**

**Sgt. Evans was the MWD handler's team trainer, who had had to deliver the news to the author that, due to Cajun's behavior, it was determined that he would have to be euthanized.]**



**Above: Joe Quirarte and Cajun during training at the canine explosive detection training course in the mid-80's.**

I begged Sgt. Evans to help me champion Cajun's cause. I assured him that I would do anything demanded of me in order to help change Cajun's fate. I had no idea what I could do, but I would totally dedicate myself to perfecting whatever skills it took to save Cajun's life. I begged for a chance, or at least for some time. I remember Sgt. Evans removing his beret and dragging the back of his hand across his mouth. A quiet, unimposing man, he

didn't welcome this uncomfortable scenario. I imagined he hated delivering the bad news to me. I was also pretty sure that he'd hate returning to the decision making authority armed with nothing more than a simple airman's emotional plea. Showing obvious apprehension, but failing terribly in hiding his own desire to see a little mercy granted to Cajun, Sgt. Evans relented. He agreed to see if he could persuade those who recommended the orders, to reconsider them.

I'll never forget the look on Sgt. Evans' face when he returned with an answer. He smiled and said that a decision had been made to give me two weeks to turn Cajun around. I really wanted to howl with joy. I also wanted to grab Sgt. Evans and give him a big ol' bear hug. I decided to do neither. But I thanked him as profusely and annoyingly as a guy possibly could. I felt renewed and fully charged with determination. I was, however, informed of one little caveat in the arrangement; I would have to agree to being washed back in the explosive detection course for two weeks, starting over from that point in the training. That was, of course, if Cajun did, in fact, make a complete turnaround.

Not giving a rip about being washed back (they could've washed me back a year for all I cared) I quickly made the rounds asking trainers, handlers, kennel masters, whoever I could to gain enough information to get a solid game plan in effect. I knew I was able to gentle Cajun in regards to his over aggressiveness; I was already making headway with that. But I needed help with the weird stuff like his Quixote-

like response to phantom adversaries. From what I could gather, it seemed that a heavy dose of exposure to certain objects, along with positive reinforcement, was the key to giving Cajun a fair chance to prove himself.

Together, Cajun and I set out to face all his demons. But I knew that if we were to make any headway it would rely heavily upon Cajun's will and desire, and not my own. We revisited every wooden floor, ceiling fan, mirror, water fountain, pool table, and many other objects that had caused him anxiety during his opening weeks of explosive detection training. For the most part, Cajun and I employed a consistent strategy in addressing his phobias. The plan we employed for taming the unruly soda machine is a good example. As we approached the soda machine I let Cajun move as slowly as he needed. After several passes, we eventually got ourselves close enough to where we could both sit next to the rumbling machine for varying amounts of time. I stroked Cajun's head and encouraged him, for however long it seemed necessary in order to get him to relax. I placed his ball in the chute, coaching him as best as I could, until he felt comfortable enough to retrieve it himself. We spent the days visiting the barracks with all their horrors, sitting together by each demon, exorcising them and banishing them, empowering Cajun with trust and confidence. I stayed in his kennel with him as long, and as often as I could, sitting on the cool floor next to him.

And so the weeks passed with some pretty impressive results. Cajun was even beginning to show early signs of becoming a pushbutton MWD, a status he would fully attain later on in his training. In regards to

Cajun continued from page 9

his patrol work, he was learning to control his aggressiveness, using it only when it was appropriate. Basically, Cajun began to exhibit qualities more consistent with the program's expectations and, with a lot of repetitious training, learned what traits to enhance, and which ones to discard. As we reached the end of the allotted two weeks, I was informed that Cajun's progress was sufficient enough to enter back into the explosive detection training program. I was pumped!

After completing the required twelve weeks of training, Cajun and I finally received our certification. I was so excited to be leaving Lackland AFB after such a long stay; however, thanks to Cajun, I would take some very meaningful memories with me. Lackland was just the starting point of the journey that Cajun and I would take together, cheating a tragic fate, and rising from that dark day with renewed hope. It was for me, a real-life eucatastrophe, borrowing a coined term from Tolkien; a joyful moment achieved through tragic circumstances, a fairytale ending.

One day, sometime before our departure to our next base, Cajun and I visited the Lackland veterinarian's office for one of Cajun's scheduled examinations. I knew handlers weren't supposed to thumb through their dog's medical records, but somehow the contents of Cajun's file revealed itself to me while I was inside the veterinarian's examination room. I learned that Cajun was found as a stray dog, roaming the streets of Skellytown, Texas. I wondered just how much this past experience may have contributed to his initial inability to cope with his surroundings. As Cajun's file continued disclosing miscellaneous notes, I happened to notice that when Cajun was picked up off the streets he was covered with twenty-eight ticks. Who knew the totality of experiences that this dog was forced to endure, and why? Cajun was no stranger to hardship, and now he was no stranger to grace and redemption.

The day came when Cajun and I shipped off to Colorado, where we would be assigned to Peterson Air Base, splitting duty

between there and NORAD Air Station. During his time in Colorado, Cajun grew to have such a wonderful disposition that he would eventually prance alongside me on patrol, gaining fans among the civilian, enlisted, and officer ranks (including a couple of Generals). With his left ear tipping forward, Cajun's large brown eyes and happy smile helped him easily win people over. He was, I would learn from others, actually cute, a far cry from that raging pillar of fire.

Cajun eventually did become that pushbutton dog. He was spot-on in every phase of patrol dog training. He'd attack right on cue (appropriately shedding his cuteness) and release just as obediently. He was extremely agile on the obstacle course and loved the rush that came with scouting, building searches, and apprehending suspects. He thoroughly enjoyed training for patrol, greatly anticipating any chance to bite a bad guy.

Cajun was also lights-out in his detection work. So much so that he helped us gain a temporary duty assignment to Africa that was originally slotted for an NCO, a rank I had not yet achieved. We were awarded the assignment based on the fact that Cajun held one of the top detection percentage rates among CONUS dog teams. He had definitely come a long way.

All too soon, new orders came. I was being reassigned to Osan Air Base, in South Korea. My last moment with Cajun was a heartbreaking parting at the Peterson AFB kennel facility. He was giving me his usual business, the same routine he gave me every night. He stood on his hind legs, peering over the kennel's four foot tall brick wall, hollering at me with the high-pitched, yapping plea that he'd transition to whenever he saw me leaving the kennels. I remember looking at him



**Above and Below: The last goodbye— . My last moment with Cajun was a heartbreaking parting at the Peterson AFB kennel facility. He was giving me his usual business, the same routine he gave me every night.**



Cajun continued on page 11

Cajun continued from page 10

one last time, as he was watching me through the chain link surrounding his kennel. Only on this occasion, I wasn't coming back. No matter how many times you say goodbye, one of them is always the last.

This has been a story about a dog, not a man...not me. I wrote it for Cajun, out of appreciation for our time together, and how he lives so profoundly in my heart. This very special dog prompted me to make a phone call to Peterson Air Base years ago, when I had guessed Cajun to be approaching his twelfth year or so. I needed to know if he was still alive (though I was terribly afraid to hear anything disappointing). The kennel master was happy to inform me that Cajun was still plugging along and that everybody loved him. I hung up politely, gratefully, but promising myself I'd never call again; all that thinking about whether Cajun was still alive or dead had been too taxing. I knew there was nothing in my power to keep Cajun alive forever, though I wished there was. I never wanted to hear the news of his passing. I was happy knowing that he was loved.

This is where my story about Cajun comes to an end, but not without one last, magical moment. Just a few months ago I sat up in bed, wakened by a slow, moving Corelli violin concerto, one of my favorites, apparently serving as cover music for the experience I was about to have. I looked down toward the foot of my bed and saw

Cajun, sitting on the floor, with his back against the wall, looking at me with loving recognition. He had his memorable smile working its magic, and his eyes were still big and brown. He sat happily in a soft glow, the music beautifully contextualizing the moment. It was obvious he had aged. His coat seemed scruffier and grayer, allowing me, retrospectively, to witness the years that I had missed with him. Cajun stared at me, smiling and panting happily, apparently knowing I'd eventually make my way over to him.

I found myself sitting down on the floor in front of my faithful friend, wrapping my arms around him. He had come to give me this last chance to embrace him and to say goodbye. I held him tightly and burrowed my head up under his jaw as he tilted his muzzle downward, tucking my head closer, consoling me, as we embraced each other for one last time. And all too soon he had to go, and he lovingly melted away. This goodbye, not the previous one at Peterson Air Base, had become our final goodbye.

Saying goodbye to him was painful and, sitting in the dark on the edge of the bed, it was hard to fight the tears. Yet my awareness began to sharpen, and I came to a point where I believed I was beginning to understand the event more clearly, and I became overwhelmed with gratitude. I had felt the power of an encounter, seemingly orchestrated by a nighttime mystery, which had granted me the rarest of opportunities. Such is grace. Goodbye,

Cajun.

We served together, in this life, from 1985 -1987.

*Author's note:*

*As I told this story, I sensed a responsibility to mention two very important points. The first point being that this story should not serve to vilify any person, or any vocation. It is a story told from memory and I am certainly unsure of the roles individuals actually played outside of my presence. This story is not intended to be a condemnation of military brass, or military veterinary staff. As far as I am aware, veterinarians serve MWDs dutifully, and considering today's combat conditions, even heroically. In finishing this thought, it may be best to focus on a very important fact, one that I am absolutely sure of. Someone involved in Cajun's story, somehow, compassionately reasoned that Cajun should be given another chance.*

*The other point I feel should be mentioned about this story is that it involves a peacetime dog team. Certainly, there is nothing wrong with the peacetime setting in this story. But I feel it would be disrespectful, to say the least, if I let this story stand alone, outside of the context of the wider, more complicated reality of military working dog history. It is probably unlikely that anyone (including myself), having never established a bond with a dog in combat conditions, can ever understand the power and depth of that relationship. The combat MWD teams that have served in the past, and those that continue to do so today, should always garner the most respect and honor when the subject of MWDs becomes a topic of discussion. So I am humbly, and sincerely, doing so here. You have this peacetime handler's complete respect and admiration; and so do your MWDs.*

## One More Day

by Michael Hurder

One more day, another mile  
Another child, a broken smile  
Mortars, RPGs, IEDs  
Evian, sunscreen, MREs  
Sandbags, Humvees, Bradleys and Apaches  
Letters from home, insurgents attacking  
Brothers-and sisters-in-arms together  
Brothers and sisters they've lost forever  
That is the life-beat of our kids in harm's way  
They are the reason I continue to say...

I pledge allegiance...

## Mississippi State Vet School Hosting Columbus AFB Handlers for Common Injuries Class

By Courtney Griffin

On Saturday, March 28th, seven dog handlers from the Columbus Air Force Base and two civilian handlers from Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama, were treated to a day of education at Mississippi State University in nearby Starkville, Mississippi.

The event was coordinated by Teri Villers, the army veterinarian out of Redstone (Huntsville, AL) and Gretchen McLaughlin, a 4th year HPSP (Health Professions Scholarship Program) student, along with MWD TSA Volunteer and current 1<sup>st</sup> year veterinary student, Courtney Griffin.

The handlers came to the vet school and learned about treating common injuries that their MWDs might encounter in the field

with two faculty clinicians and two certified veterinary technicians. Presentations included more complex subject matter such as "How To Perform a Tracheostomy" and "How To Intubate," in addition to more routine clinical tasks such as checking vital signs and bandaging procedures. Each presentation was accompanied by hands-on demonstrations that allowed the handlers to put their skills to the test using both veterinary dummies and Gretchen's dog, Kaya.

The handlers really enjoyed it and appreciated the lunch and goodies from MWD TSA.

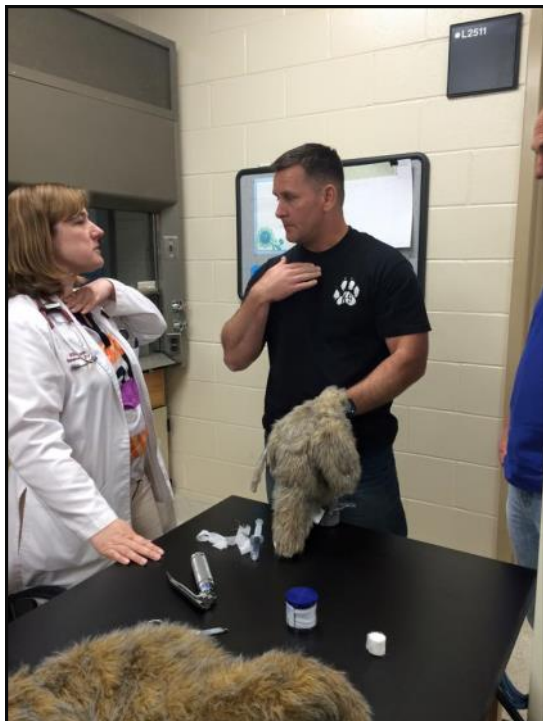


***Above: Each presentation was accompanied by hands-on demonstrations that allowed the handlers to put their skills to the test.***



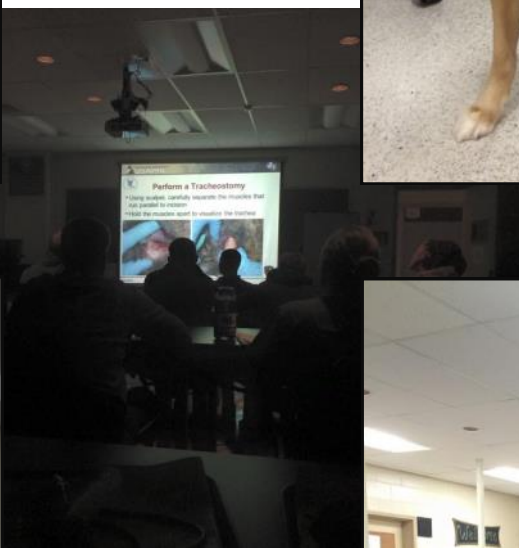
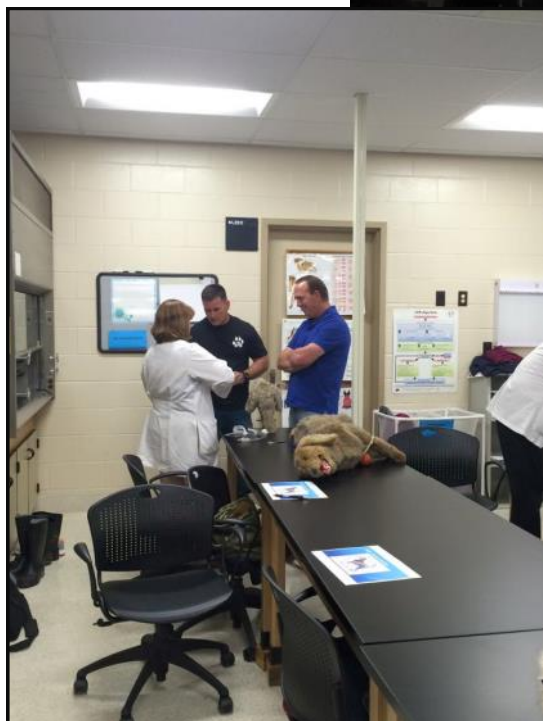
***Above: MWD TSA Volunteer and current 1<sup>st</sup> year veterinary student, Courtney Griffin.***

State Vet School Hosting Handler Class continued from page 3



***This page:***

***Presentations included more complex subject matter such as "How To Perform a Tracheostomy" and "How To Intubate," in addition to more routine clinical tasks such as checking vital signs and bandaging procedures.***



## 43 Years and a Wake-Up

by Michael Hurder

...the overarching bellow of white noise slowly abated. There was no other sensation for a few moments that seemed an age. I heard the soft but hurried footpads of your approach. I felt your paw on my chest; heard the anxious soft whine on each intake of your breath. I felt the liquid sensation of your tongue on my cheek. I opened my eyes. I saw your face...I was alive.

I now think that from my first moment in-country I was destined to be with you, boy. I had a desperate need for a companion and a guardian and you had to be him. I finally understood what was meant back at Fort Benning when they spoke of "bonding".

From our first duty at the PX supply yard, to the Air Force Bomb depot, to sapper sweeps outside the wire, you never failed

to keep me safe. You never allowed harm to come between us, always leading, ever protecting. My demise was my own doing and yet you still saved me.

As fierce a guardian as you were, you were still my big old cuddly Prince who loved to frolic and would belly crawl a mile to play with a child. Your tenacity through the terrible, horrible carnage of the battle field saved two little ones, in spite of our best efforts to close our eyes. By saving them, you once again saved me. We lived the mission to its fullest and protected the innocent; not through my intrepid determination, but through yours.

As my spirit faded with the realization of the futility of our efforts understanding that we would, in the end, turn away from these people,

you served on and reminded me always of our duty, honor and service. A better soldier I never met. A better friend? Only in my dreams, as we play Frisbee on a free open field surrounded by throngs of laughing children..

43 years and a wake-up ago, I opened my eyes, I saw your face, for the last time... Good boy!

Prince (16X5) , 34th Patrol Dog Platoon, 3rd Bde, 1st Cav, Bien Hoa, RVN 1972



**Right: Michael Hurder, a Vietnam War Veteran and MWDTSA volunteer, today. Overlaying this is a copy of his ID photo from 1972.**

## Wings of Wonder Eagle Release

by Allison Merrill

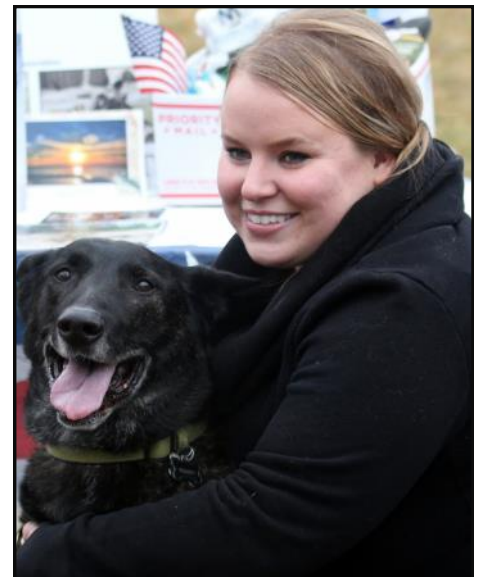
Photos by Christine Coates Photography



Wings of Wonder in Empire, MI a 501(c) (3) is dedicated to raptor rehabilitation, education, and research. Rebecca Lesard is the person behind Wings of Wonder. She has a wonderful Board of Directors to help her do amazing things for the community and for raptors.

One of the past eagle releases this winter in Traverse City, MI was dedicated to area veterans. It was held at Grand Traverse Veteran's Memorial Park. MWDTSA, along with A Matter of Honor (AMOH), and Veteran's for Peace were invited to attend and talk about each of our groups.

Allison Merrill represented MWDTSA and presented to a few hundred people our missions and what we do here at MWDTSA. Retired MWD Remmy was pre-



Wings of Wonder continued on page 15

## Wildlife Prairie Park War Dog Memorial

Submitted by Michael Hurder  
Written by Dave Broeker



This beautifully crafted Illinois War Memorial captures the unique relation between Handler and K9; one of steadfastness, courage, loyalty and devotion to duty. Together they safely and willingly lead the way.

VDHA Officer and past handler, Dave Broeker provides us with the story...

WildLife Prairie Park  
War Dog Memorial  
**Location:** Peoria, Illinois  
**Sculptor:** Erin Mallon  
**Dedicated:** 05/01/2003

My wife and I live in Pekin, Illinois which is a suburb of Peoria, Illinois and we were honored to have been asked to attend the Dedication Ceremony on 05/01/2003, by William Rutherford, the owner of Wild Life Prairie Park at that time. Bill asked Erin Mallon to design the sculpture and he paid 100% for it out of his own pocket.

We were fortunate to learn of the proposed sculpture a year before it was ever dedicated so we got to see a lot of behind the scenes events that I'd like to share with you at these 2 links:

<http://www.pbase.com/635thk9/wildlife>  
[http://www.pbase.com/vdha/wild\\_life&page=all](http://www.pbase.com/vdha/wild_life&page=all)

**NOTE:** The park was originally farmland owned by William Rutherford. He negotiated a deal with the State of Illinois to take it over from him. Unfortunately, 2 years later, William Rutherford passed on. It continued to be a STATE Park for several years until the state of Illinois cut way back and closed a lot of state parks and state owned property. Fortunately, before it could be shut down, private citizens arranged to take it back over and it no longer is a "STATE" Park. BUT, the park has not changed and the War Dog Memorial is still standing proudly.

Dave Broeker  
VDHA Webmaster

From myself and anyone who's ever felt the heart tug of a furry partner right there with you in harm's way, thanks to all who contributed to this most honorable project. Lest we forget...

Wings of Wonder continued on page 14



sent and plan was for him to stand with Allison during her speech however, the microphone irritated his ears so we was safely placed back in his van until the talks were over.

The eagle was unloaded out of her crate and walked around in Rebecca's arms for pics. Then the countdown began! And off she flew! Free after Wings of Wonder rehabilitated her.



## Sit. Stay. Support.

MWDTSA  
P. O. Box 5864  
Canton, GA 30114  
Editor: Avril Roy-Smith

Phone: 404-451-2539  
Email: [info@mwdtisa.org](mailto:info@mwdtisa.org)



MWDTSA is on the web: [www.mwdtisa.org](http://www.mwdtisa.org)

Subscribe to Kennel Talk:

[mwdtisa.org/phplist/?p=subscribe](http://mwdtisa.org/phplist/?p=subscribe)

Join our Volunteer Team:

<http://mwdtisa.org/volunteer.html>

Like us on Facebook :

<https://www.facebook.com/MWDTSA>

Please Recycle by Sending to a Friend



Follow us on Twitter:

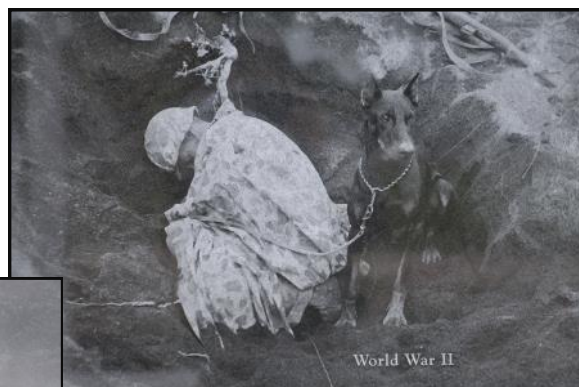
Sign up for a Twitter account at <https://twitter.com/>  
and click the "Follow" button for @MWDTSA

Kennel Talk is the proud recipient of a GSDCA Special  
Newsletter Award!

## From the Archives

On October 28, 2013, the United States first national monument recognizing the sacrifices of dogs in combat was dedicated by the U.S. military. It is officially known as the U.S. Military Working Dog Teams Monument and is at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in San Antonio, Texas.

While the five bronze statues consisting of a MWD Handler and four of the common breeds of MWDs, on a granite pedestal might be familiar, there is a granite wall behind this which is less familiar. On this wall is engraved information about the history of the U.S. MWD program and images of MWD teams from World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the current conflicts.



Shown to the right are the images (from Top to Bottom) depicting the contribution of MWDs in World War II, Vietnam, and the War on Terror.

Although the monument is located on a secure military installation, members of the public who wish to visit the installation can request a base pass at Lackland Air Force Base. This is a limited 4 hour pass, and can only be used to visit the monument.

