

April 2016
Award Winning
Monthly Newsletter

Volume 8, Issue 4

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Inside this issue:

K9 Veterans Day	1
Spreading Our Message	3
Donors & Volunteers	4
Honor 13	5
Leroy Habel	7
Fort Hood's Rocky	9
First Quarter Packages	10
Archive Photos	16

MWDTSA touches the
lives of dogs and people
near and far. This
month, our articles and
photos take us from
North Carolina to New
Jersey, California, Hawaii
and on to Japan, while
visiting dog teams
around the world as they
open their care pack-
ages. We also enjoy
watching retired military
working dogs open their
special appreciation
gifts. Our archived pho-
tos are a flashback to K9
Veterans Day in 2015!

Subscribe to see where
we connect next month!

Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

MWDTSA KENNEL TALK



MWDTSA activities in honor of K9 Veterans Day take us around the world. Meet some of the Navy handlers stationed at Naval Base Ventura County in California who put on an amazing dog demonstration. MWD Dallas, decoy OFC Torrez, MA2 Garcia, MA2 Chandler and MA2 Jarnberg. Photo courtesy of Jan Slotar.

We stopped by four kennels around the United States, along with an OCONUS Kennel in Iwakuni, Japan. Along the way, we met dozens of amazing handlers and their devoted K9 partners. Please join us for wonderful photos taken by dedicated volunteers.

MWDTSA Celebrates K9 Veterans Day

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 were 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 working dogs, MWDTSA organized multiple events this year to celebrate this legacy: MWDTSA Board Member, Allison Merrill, created Honor 13 care boxes for thirteen retired MWDs selected from a random drawing. MWDTSA held social media events on Facebook and Twitter and also recognized this day by doing base visits at installations across the country and even one

on the other side of the world.

Join us as we spend time with dogs and handlers at Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine bases from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to three different Naval bases: Naval Weapons Station Earle in New Jersey, Naval Base Ventura County in California and Pearl Harbor in Hawaii which also includes Air Force handlers from Joint Base Hickam. Lastly, we stopped by and celebrated with the Marines at the base in Iwakuni, Japan.

Along the way, we invited a few veteran dog handlers to accompany us. It was a celebration that touched the hearts of many. What a ride!

MWDTSA Celebrates con't on page 2

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MWD TSA Celebrates con't from page 1

In presenting news about the success of our events, President, Nikki Rohrig stated, "I want to take a moment to congratulate our volunteers on the spectacular day that we had. MWD TSA was able to conduct three base visits today, that were attended by five brand new volunteers. They, along with seasoned volunteers, were on military bases around the world proudly wearing MWD TSA t-shirts. That's pretty impressive and I'm so proud of everyone for the great day that we've had!"

"Many of you got to view a kennel and a demo for the first time, which is always exciting. AND we're not done with K9 Veterans Day events! We've got two additional base visits and I know those will be a success also."

"Today was a great day for MWD TSA and I am so happy that we have a great bunch of supporters to keep us moving forward. You are the reason that MWD TSA is successful and we are very appreciative of your time and efforts today and every day. Keep up the good stuff!"

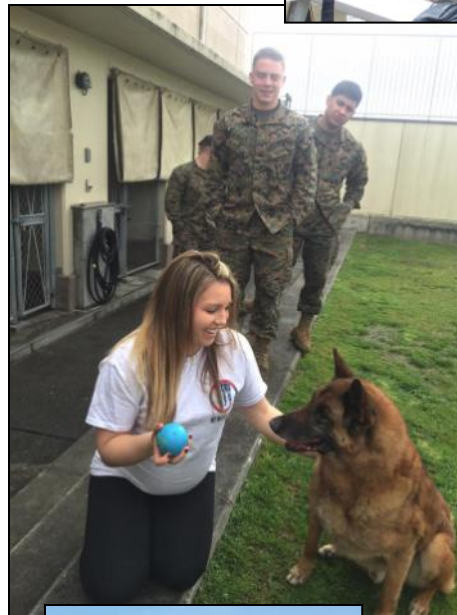
Coordinating five base visits in a whirlwind salute to K9 Veterans Day was no easy feat! It was, however, a challenge to which our dedicated volunteers were able to rise. Each base presented unique opportunities and provided personal connections.

As an organization, we are humbled at the opportunities to participate one-on-one with handlers, to catch glimpses of their activities, and to share with them the commitment of our supporters to ensure that they know America "has their six".

Please join us for a tour of all five visits. Congrats to all participants for an amazing day of connections and camaraderie.



Above: MWD TSA volunteers, Christa Ursini, Rob Schnell, Chris Nielsen, Krista Hernandez and Brittany Nielsen joined KM, MA2 Quiles-Rivera and the handlers at Naval Weapons Station Earle in New Jersey.



Left: Volunteer Hailey Lowe shares a toy at the Marine base in Iwakuni, Japan.

Below: Fort Bragg Army handler and her partner pose with one of the great Army bandanas made by our very own volunteer, Jan Slotar.



Left: Air Force Kennel Master at Hawaii's Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam helps PV2 Houck, an MWD TSA guest, don a bite suit.

MWD TSA salutes our dedicated volunteers for making these base visits happen.

MWDTSA Spreads Our Message Around the World



NAVAL WEAPONS STATION EARLE— Story by Chris Nielsen, photos by Christa Ursini and Rob Schnell

When asked if I was interested in coordinating and attending a base visit here in New Jersey, I jumped at the opportunity. I was thrilled to be a part of one of these awesome experiences I read about monthly in the Kennel Talk Newsletter. I would be meeting Jose Api Quiles-Rivera, Kennel Master, at NWS Earle, who was sponsored with his partner, K9 Betty, by MWDTSA at the 100th celebration of the German Shepherd Dog in America back in October of 2013. Also attending were Christa Ursini, Krista Hernandez, my wife, Brittany, Rob and Maani Schnell and their daughter, Ishanika Gabriele.

Our morning started off with the delivery of our care basket to Kennel Master, Jose, and a few other handlers along with some breakfast food and coffee. We then began the tour of the kennel on base learning about the diets and weigh-ins the MWDs face monthly. We continued on to where the loud barking was coming from, and the MWDs were anxiously waiting to say "Hi". We toured the agility/obedience course, had some more coffee, and waited for K9 handler Dustin to bring out MWD Yoda to demonstrate bite work.

The dogs in the kennels were all highly trained in security patrol and explosive detection. For volunteers this meant we would stand behind the chain-linked fence, as MWD Yoda would grab a hold of the decoy "intruder" who was not listening to K9 handler Dustin's orders. Even though MWD Yoda received his Kong for doing such great work he was not done yet. The team also demonstrated the agility/obedience course for us all to see. Lastly, we got to watch MWD Yoda's other talents in detecting explosives, which were simulated on one of the vehicles in the parking lot.

At that time a Navy Police Officer brought out his K9, Danny, a handsome sable German shepherd who also showed off his nose talents by detecting the inert explosive. When we all thought the base visit was wrapping up, in came in the sweetest MWD we met all day, Betty. She just got finished searching a U.S. carrier in port and was delighted to see strangers. Betty is trained solely in detection. We were allowed to pet this beautiful German Shepherd and she loved every minute of it. Not to be outdone by all the male K9s, she too found the inert explosive!

It was an absolute pleasure and honor to meet the teams we support and talk so much about. For most of us, it was our first experience and hopefully not the last as I do not think any of us will forget the base visit at NWS Earle.

Photos top to bottom left:

Top Photo: Kennel Master Quiles-Rivera gives attendees a tour of the kennel facility.

Second Photo: MWD Yoda checks out locations where "things" could be hiding.

Third Photo: MWD Betty returned, red KONG in mouth, from a search aboard a carrier in port. On her way back to the kennel, she enjoyed a few moments meeting new admirers, such as volunteer Rob Schnell's daughter, Ishanika Gabriele.

See more photos and base stories at MWDTSA Spreads Message continued page 12

Thanks to our great donors

MWD TSA relies on the generosity of our donors, without whom we would be unable to complete our many missions. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the following companies and individuals who gave recent donations:

Gifts in memory of JeriLee Nickerson
 Jane E. Beckett
 Doreen Block
 Bruce and Gail Bockman
 Marguerite Chapman
 Jeffery & Julia Curel
 Donna Grisham
 Jeanne S. Jennings
 Mark and Nicole Popel
 Jacqueline Tascher
 3 Busy Dogs Seattle, Washington
 American Humane Association
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 Dick Baumer
 Stanton Bost
 Patricia Carter
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 Krista Hernandez

Madra Mor, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida
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 Richard Snyder
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 Catherine Tutt
 Christa Ursini
 Whitebridge Pet Brands, LLC.,
 St. Louis, Missouri
 Kathie Woodring

National Volunteer Week April 10-16

April 10-16th is the week to celebrate volunteers. MWD TSA is particularly blessed with dedicated, educated, selfless, and enthusiastic volunteers. We are always looking out for folks who have an interest in joining us and truly have some special needs areas from editing this awesome newsletter to grant writing. We work out of our homes. As long as you have computer access, you can become a virtual volunteer.

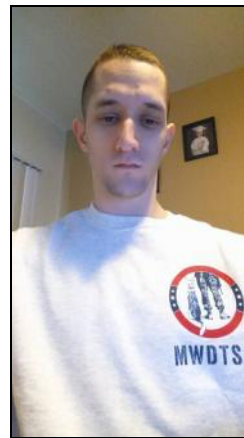
If you have talent and are just looking for the right organization with which to share it, please consider us. We are 100% volunteer-driven, which means that we are able to channel all of the goods and donations received into the work that we do.

Each year our volunteers complete four quarterly care packing events, send boxes to celebrate K9 Veterans Day, test toys, visit bases, write newsletter articles, craft bandanas, solicit donations, write grants, photograph military dog teams, communicate with dog handlers, mentor new volunteers, proofread, educate children, design logos, create artwork, and so much more.

Our volunteers are first and foremost imagineers. They imagine something special and make it happen. We could not be prouder of our amazing staff and we invite you to consider joining in on the fun.

It's really quite easy. Simply go to our website and click on the link:

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



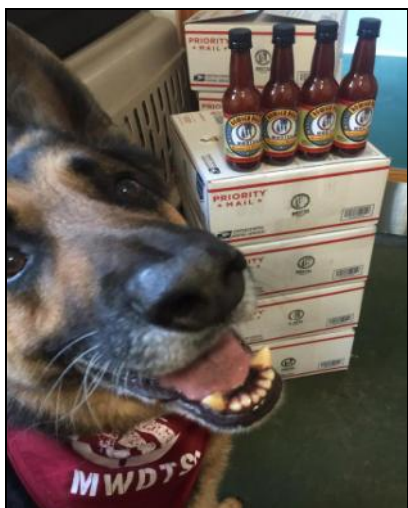
Two of our newest volunteers, both from Alaska, are featured in this issue with their new volunteer shirts.

Left: Jason Voelker, who adopted his Army MWD Grek in 2014.

Below: Jean Hixson and her wonderful pups.



Sending Honor 13 Boxes to Celebrate K9 Veterans Day



Allison Merrill, our ever-industrious, veteran-loving Board Member, created, packaged, and shipped our second annual Honor 13 boxes for K9 Veterans Day.

These boxes, shipped to retired military working dogs who were selected in a random drawing, served as a thank you for their service. People who have a veteran military working dog were invited, via our social media and/or newsletter, to submit their dog's name and information to be included in the Honor 13 drawing.

All 13 dogs chosen received a box filled with surprises and goodies specially designed by Allison and her team. Among the items included in the 2016 Honor 13 Package were wonderful KONG Bald Eagle knot toys, yummy treats, grooming supplies and just a few fun things, like bandanas to make this event all about the retired dogs.

We are ever grateful to our partners, who support us with their donations: Patriot Five Star treats, a joint supplement donated via Paws Naturally, and wonderful Dynamo Dog treats were part of the box. Bowser Beer sent us some great "beer" for dogs, which is a cool meat tasting broth. Madra Mor Mud contributed their always fabulous soothing mud spa packs and local Traverse City supporters added some special touches.

Our cute spokesdog, Tank, joined Allison to approve all of the box components, although he may have made the packing itself a bit more complicated with his never-ending quest to be the official toy tester of every single toy being shipped.

Top left: Spokesdog, Tank, poses with some of the Patriot Five Star Treats.

Center left: Madra Mor Mud shares their Mobility Spa treatment with our retirees. This is such a great gift for dogs who are showing their age in their movement.

Bottom left: Tank shows off the Bowser Beer.

Top right: A display of the package contents.

Center right: Pets Naturally supplied some awesome joint supplements to help our aged retired dogs whose years of work put a stress on those joints.

Bottom right: Cloud Star Treats shares some of their amazing Dynamo Dog treats for our Honor 13 boxes.



Honor 13 Boxes continued from page 5



Showcasing some of the goodies in their Honor 13 care packages, retired Military Working Dogs were asked to submit "selfies" with their adopted owners' phones. We only had room for six photos in this issue of the newsletter, but more may be found on our Facebook page and additional photos will be in our next issue.

Top Left: Nico posing on his MWD TSA blanket and sporting his new MWD TSA Honor 13 Bandana. Nico, an Army dog, served for six years and retired due to PTSD. His notable accomplishments include two apprehensions of High Value Targets in Afghanistan.

Top Right: Belo, a Marine veteran, is playing with his new KONG Knots Bald Eagle. Belo's most significant accomplishments were patrol related, like assisting with apprehensions and backing up units. He did a lot of community policing. He was always good at those events, even willing to get dressed up. He loved walking patrols and mingling with people and not intimidating them.



Middle Left: Retired Marine dog, Gulliver, poses in front of the contents of his Honor 13 package. Gulliver served from 2006 to January of 2015. He deployed to Helmand Province in Afghanistan in 2013. No one that went on a mission with Gulliver and his handler was ever injured or killed. Gulliver loves his retirement and enjoys adventuring with his handler, Matthew!

Middle Right: Retired Army girl, Eny, models her new Honor 13 Bandana while showing off her new Army food bowl and awesome D.O.G. cookie. Eny was a Patrol and Explosives Detection Dog. She served in the Army for 10 years and was stationed at Fort Lewis the whole time. She completed four deployments to Iraq with numerous explosive finds. Eny also completed almost 20 missions with the United States Secret Service, protecting our leaders.



Bottom Left: Isky, a retired Army dog, worked for over 2 years until he lost his leg in a May 2014 accident in Afghanistan. A message from his handler: "He's had over 15 IED finds and over 10 weapon cache finds. During all of his combat missions, there were 0 resulting injuries or deaths to soldiers following in his paw prints." He has been with his handler since day one and is living the retired life in Virginia.

Bottom right: Aura enjoyed opening her box herself and paused briefly for a photo with her D.O.G. Thank You Cookie in her new Marine food bowl. She served in the United States Marine Corps from 2010-2015. She was handled by SSgt Mark Daniels, with whom she was injured on June 8, 2013 in Afghanistan. After a long recovery, she was finally retired on May 22, 2015 to SSgt Daniels and his family, where she lives getting lots of belly rubs and being treated like a princess!



Leroy Habel and Major

During the Vietnam War, about two-thirds of American troops were volunteers, while the remaining troops needed were conscripted by the Selective Service Board (SSB). In June of 1969, Leroy Habel received his draft notice from the SSB at his home in the Chicagoland area, and was thus conscripted into the U.S. Army.

After passing his physical, Leroy shipped off for Basic Training to Fort Polk, Louisiana, considered by many soldiers to be the worst stateside duty station. What Fort Polk lacked in shopping malls and chain restaurants, it made up for with high humidity and every bug imaginable, making summer basic training a nightmare. It was so steamy that Leroy learned not to waste time trying to dry off, because "dry" wasn't happening at Fort Polk. His Advanced Infantry Training was also conducted at Fort Polk. Lucky Leroy.

Because of his outstanding scores on the entrance tests, Leroy was immediately pegged for Officer Candidate School to become a NCOC (Non Commissioned Officer Candidate). Due to the shortages of manpower for the prolonged engagement in Vietnam, the Army was desperately searching for leaders to place in the roles of Sergeants and had introduced a way to fast track bright, young E-1 Privates to E-5 Sergeants in a matter of about five months training. Due to their lack of battlefield experience and time in the Army, these new Sergeants were often referred to as "Shake and Bakes." Leroy refused; he did not want to be an inexperienced soldier leading others into battle.

Next, a representative of the Scout Dog School stopped by Fort Polk's graduating classes and mentioned they were looking for volunteers to become scout dog handlers. Although Leroy had never yet volunteered for anything, his mind calculated that "On Leash" Scout Dog School lasted 12 weeks and then another 8 weeks "Off Leash" for a total of 20 weeks before he could be shipped off to Vietnam; this school might be worth it.

During the war in Vietnam, Army Scout Dog School was conducted at Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga. While Fort Benning may not have been a huge improvement in the humidity and critter department over Fort Polk, it was at least near a larger city and this class was not being conducted during the blistering summer months.

At Fort Benning, Leroy was introduced to Major 683A, a black and tan German shepherd dog, who was to become his scout dog. For the first five days of their partnership Leroy spent time in Major's kennel run to feed and bond with him. Major wasn't easily impressed; he sat upright at the back of the kennel and studied Leroy. This stoic canine had high expectations of a handler; he was a smart dog and he wanted a smarter leader. On the sixth day, Major approached Leroy and communicated that he was ready to consider Leroy his handler.

Scout dogs were trained to provide alerts to the enemy through any anomaly of sight, sound, or smell. Because herding breeds are selectively bred for working qualities that also support military needs, they are often breeds of choice. Their vision captures movement of their flock; therefore, any movement will catch their attention. Their sense of hearing is perhaps four to five times greater than ours, with multiple ear muscles that allow dogs to hone in on specific locations of noise origin. Their sense of smell is perhaps tens of thousands times better than humans.

Sgt. Fuller, the On Leash class trainer, drilled them hard for their first twelve weeks to smell for the enemy, to listen for wind sweeping across a trip wire or to sight slight movement in an otherwise calm scene. Scenarios were set up to teach and to instill the communication needed to run up the leash from dog to handler or from handler down to dog. It was a tough training regimen for a tough deployment. "We had no time to play Patty Cake or other kids' games," said Habel.

Story and photo by D. Whitman



Leroy Habel poses for a moment during the telling of his story.

In a very short time, Major and Habel would be walking out in front of a platoon, Major as canine "point man" and Habel as Major's handler, in an attempt to keep the infantrymen walking behind them safe. Major was a pretty adept student. He was serious about his job. If Major had an inkling of a trip wire, he would reach out and stop his handler, with his teeth, if the handler tried to pass. Some people considered it a bite. Whatever it was, it was effective! It only took Major one training session to be sure that Leroy would not go around him.

"The only negative that anyone could say about Major, other than the fact that he bit every instructor at Fort Benning during his training, was that more often than not, he was too good." Habel continues, "His sense and instincts were such that he would alert so far ahead of the patrol that sometimes the platoon or company leader

Leroy Habel continued from page 7

would second guess if it was a false alert because there was nothing in the immediate area. I knew better."

After graduation from Scout Dog School, Leroy and Major, along with the remainder of their class, were headed over to Vietnam, scheduled to be attached to Scout Dog units in country. Their C141 Starlifter cargo plane only allowed them webbed seating, but had plenty of room for crated dogs. Their journey started out at Fort Benning, then went northeast to Fort Dix, then northwest to Alaska and via Japan before the final leg into Saigon.

Getting off of the plane in Saigon with the punishing sunlight, decaying smells and unusual sounds, Leroy and Major were headed for a Scout Dog Platoon after a few days of orientation. Fate stepped in and changed their direction. As he got off the airplane in Vietnam, Leroy recognized the familiar face, Sgt. Fuller, the trainer who had taken a liking to him in his first 12 weeks of Scout Dog classes at Fort Benning. Sgt. Fuller mentioned that he was looking for a Scout Dog Team to attach to a Combat Tracker Unit, but because it was a special operations unit, anyone attached had to be a volunteer. And, that was a problem because when asked, Leroy responded, "I ain't volunteering for a damn thing in this man's Army".

"Habel, these Combat Trackers will bring you home again." pleaded the Sergeant. Getting home again, alive was a certain goal for all of these new handlers.

So, for the second time in the Army, Leroy became a volunteer.

The concept behind a Tracker Team in Vietnam was that once any infantry unit made contact with the enemy, the Tracker team was brought in to track the quarry back to their lair. These teams were useful in following the bad guy once first contact had been made. They were also useful in finding American pilots who had parachuted out of a downed plane,

but could not call out or make any noise lest they give away their location to the enemy. The Tracker teams were also used during a mission if one or more troopers got separated from their units and needed to be found. Since the job of a tracking dog is to track by scent alone, Labrador retrievers or other hunting breeds are extremely successful and used by most Trackers in Vietnam. They are joyful and gregarious and don't often meet strangers, their only fault really, when you are in enemy territory and your dog is only trying to hone in on a certain smell.

The makeup of a Combat Tracker Team fluctuated with mission and available personnel, however, the standard structure was a five person and one dog team: a Team Leader, a Radio Man, a Coverman to provide over watch for either the Visual Tracker, a soldier trained to follow cutting signs, or the Tracker Dog and Dog Handler who were following the scent. The 62nd Combat Trackers were about to change that standard. A German shepherd Scout Dog was going to join a Labrador retriever Combat Tracker to become a dual dog Tracker team.

Lt. Ken Besecker, who had previously gone through Scout Dog School at Fort Benning as a young 2nd Lt., realized that adding another element, the Scout Dog and Scout Dog Handler, to his Combat Tracker Teams would allow them a bit more flexibility and ability to pivot. When they felt they were getting closer to the end of the trail, the more wary Scout Dog could relieve the friendly Labrador and provide an earlier alert.

"Lieutenants were generally smart, but they weren't always wise." Leroy counted himself lucky that his LT was both.

Ronnie Eubanks, a team leader with the 62nd Combat Trackers (62 IPCT), spent a lot of time staging events to train and test Major; each scenario built on skills demonstrated in the previous challenges. It quickly became clear that Major and Habel could hold their own and they were sent

out as part of the 62nd Combat Trackers to a Fire Base with another 125 or so men waiting for missions to arrive. The Fire Bases are miserable outposts, in most cases, with bunkers and men who experience boredom and bravado, but not always in equal doses. In between the fire fights and incoming exploding shells, there was a lot of time to kill. There also weren't as many officers, so the regulations and structure were a bit more lax.

Major was tethered to his house on these Fire Bases because no permanent kennels were available. He was Habel's constant companion and charge. The rabble rousing was greater at Fire Bases, so Major had to deal with a lot of folks who were unfamiliar with the nature of and skill set found in a scout dog. One day Leroy heard Major's guttural growling and then angry barking. Major was reacting to a group of soldiers who were taunting him just out of reach of his chain.

"Leave my dog alone. Don't mess with my dog," Leroy demanded. By now, Major was a whirling dervish of teeth, saliva and death threats. He may not have recognized the gang signs his tormentors were throwing his way, but he knew they were up to no good. The soldier laughed: "We're just trying to play with the dog."

Stressors are way too common in a war zone and having "friendly fire" headed towards your dog isn't cool. Leroy knew the Fire Base was so small that that posse would be back around, so he devised a plan. When he finally got Major settled back down, Leroy put the plan in motion to nip the abuse in the bud.

Leroy moved Major and his dog hooch several feet closer to where the tormentors had recently stood. He placed several feet of Major's chain under the dog's belly and out of view. Sure enough, a couple of hours later, the men taunting Major were back for a second round, flashing gang signs and laughing maniacally at

Leroy Habel continued from page 9

Leroy Habel continued from page 8

Major, whose chain was supposed to keep Major two feet short of them. Only this time when he launched, Major had extra slack. He caught the tormentors and gave their ring leader a good once over.

Leroy was only a tiny bit sorry for the injuries that befell that soldier on that date. He was asked about the incident and cited the soldiers' earlier claim: "He (Major) was only trying to play with them."

Because Major was the only Scout Dog attached to the Combat Tracker Teams, he had "umpteenth missions." One of his most dangerous was into Cambodia, but he was also working missions in Vietnam.

"One mission took us through a rubber plantation. Major gave a series of strong alerts over a thousand meters away. Only after stopping and searching the area numerous times did everyone finally realize that Major was dead on," shared Habel.

"One sad fact that I will take to my grave is the disgraceful way that our government

politicians just allowed these hero dogs to be euthanized and disposed of in Vietnam instead of returning home to our native soil."

"After my discharge, my mission was to do everything in my power to bring Major home. Sadly, I failed."

"I made an appointment to meet with my congressman in downtown Chicago. I'm sure that he had an idea of what the meeting was about, so I was able to meet only with this top aide. In his well-rehearsed speech, I was told that "these dogs presented a danger to society because of all the diseases and parasites that they would bring back to this country."

"Name one," Habel challenged.

"He couldn't. In his lame way to appease me, he told me that it was out of his hands and there was nothing that he could do. My last words to him were, 'My dog did more for this country than you, the congressman, and all of the sorry-ass politicians in Washington, D.C. could ever do.'

I turned my back and never shook his hand."

"In the end, my dog gets a needle when the government determines that they didn't need him anymore and those same sorry-ass politicians named a building in downtown Chicago after my "distinguished" congressman. What a country."

"I am happy for today's dog handlers that they are able to return the love and respect that these dogs so rightfully earned back here at home."

"With respect to all of the other war dogs, you show me a dog handler who doesn't believe that his was the best dog in country, and I'll show you someone who has no business being a dog handler."

"The last thing that I want to write about Major is that he was the best damned dog to ever serve in Vietnam. He will always be part of my life and the lives of every G.I. who followed him through the jungles of Vietnam."

MWD Rocky to Return to Fort Hood

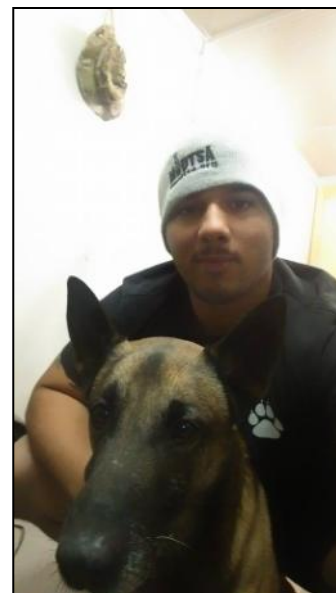
Great news is coming out of Dog Center Europe: Rocky, a military working dog deployed out of Fort Hood and injured in Afghanistan, is making a great recovery and will soon be heading home to Fort Hood. You might remember Rocky as the MWD whose story went viral in late 2015 when he was photographed wearing a purple heart medal while recuperating from his wounds.

Along the way, we anticipate that he will make a pit stop at Walter Reed Medical Center and visit with his handler, Andrew Brown, who is also recovering from wounds received in the same incident.

MWD TSA hopes Rocky has a swift trip home and we are sure that all of our supporters wish both members of this team a full recovery.



Above: MWD Rocky, who was injured with his handler earlier in Afghanistan, is scheduled to return to Fort Hood around the end of March.



Right: Rocky and Andrew as they deployed.

1st Quarter Care Packages Received

Thanks to a group of intrepid volunteers, our first quarter care packages, 200 in all, are now in the hands and paws of deployed dog teams.

The theme of the box was the Super Bowl and contents included a Chuck-It Football, a NFL Team hat, and long sleeved T-shirt to honor America's winter classic.

Also included were D.O.G. Bakery football cookies, Cloud Star Dynamo Dog Endurance, Pet Chatz, and Pedigree dog treats.

We included a few gear items, such as a dual-logoed mug, provided by American Humane Association (AHA), one side with the MWD TSA logo and the other with the AHA logo, and the nail trimmer which allows the dogs to get a "paw"dicure.

Some of our great long-term partners are represented in this box and we thank them for their ongoing support. Packed at AHA headquarters, AHA was our postage partner on our first quarter boxes.



Top: First quarter care package contents included great items for both the dogs and handlers.

Center: A kennel down range poses in a comedic thank you panorama.

Right: A handler shows off his mug and Super Bowl-inspired long-sleeved T-shirt designed by our very own graphic designer, Christa Ursini.



1st Quarter Care Packages continued from page 10



Top left: A handler shows off the D.O.G. football cookies. They make the best baked goods.

Top right: Diesel with the T-shirt and Chuck-It football. Diesel took his football out for a trial run before the photo op.

Below: The mug with AHA and MWD TSA logos.



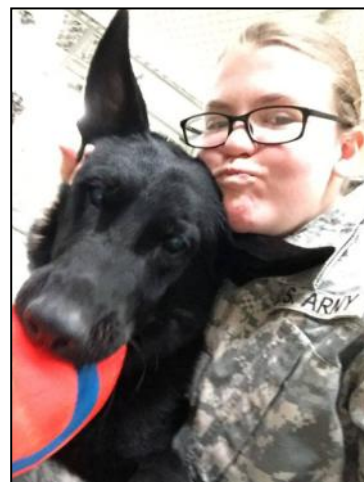
Right: One of the handlers showing off the contents of the care package.

Below: We love sending high quality treats like these Dynamo Dog treats from Whitebridge Pet Brands.



Left: Another team poses in front of some of the box contents: shirt, Bowser Beer, Dynamo and Pedigree dog treats, the AHA mug, a blanket, Doggles, NFL hat, styptic powder, Outward Hound collapsible water bowl, and dental care via Animal Hospital of Thousand Oaks.

Right: Dog team poses with their favorite new toy, a Chuck-It football.



www.mwdtsa.org

MWD TSA Spreads Message continued from page 3

FORT BRAGG– Story by Ashley Dunkle and photos by D. Whitman

MWD TSA's second visit of the day was at Fort Bragg, where guests included Vietnam era veterans Robert Hughes and Perry Money along with Perry's wife, Josie. MWD TSA volunteers were represented by Dixie Whitman and her spouse, Jerry Whitman; Ashley Dunkle, her spouse, Kyle Dunkle; and Kyle's parents Richard and Linda Dunkle. Volunteers were escorted by SSgt. Fishel onto post where they were met at the kennels by MPs eager to show off their canine skills.

Each kennel visit is a bit different, but at this event we offloaded a "kennel full of coffee" along with the normal fare. We enjoyed Subway sandwiches for lunch, which are a favorite of the MPs and the K9 units on Fort Bragg, according to the Subway Sandwich Lady.

The demonstrations here were fabulous and we were able to observe MWD Dix and his handler, Spc. Neff, with some bite work. The second dog team doing a demo was MWD Daicy; she was either polishing up her bite work or training to be a low flying fur missile. She seemed to be airborne everywhere she went. Handsome MWD Max demonstrated obedience and agility work, and adorable SSD Fido finished off the demos with some obedience work and a good game of fetch.

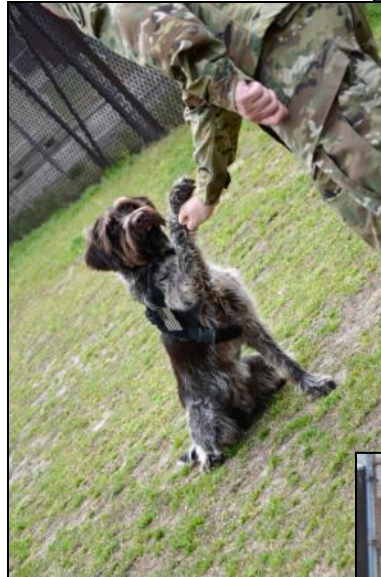
Top left: SSD Fido gives his handler, Sgt. Silvey, a high five. Fido is a German Wire Haired Pointer and one of a few MWDs that are not German shepherds, Belgian malinois or Labrador retrievers.

Top Right: MWD Dix is not about to let go of the sleeve.

Center Right: MWD Daicy turns into a fur missile when seeking her decoy. She flew over the tunnel, bounced off of the fence, and latched onto the bite sleeve.

Bottom left: MWD Max provided an obedience demo. His handler, Sgt. Boyce, played a cute game of keep away that increased his play drive while chasing after a KONG on a rope.

Bottom Right: MWD Daicy is again airborne as she grasps onto her decoy.



MWD TSA Spreads Message continued on page 13

MWD TSA Spreads Message continued from page 12



NAVAL BASE VENTURA COUNTY—Story by Jan Slotar. Photos by Jan Slotar and MA2 Jarnberg.

Crossing to the other coast, volunteer Jan Slotar enjoyed the company of Navy dog teams at Naval Base Ventura County, California.

"We had a short ceremony to honor some military working dogs of distinction, with readings by the handlers. Remembered were Satan, a French Messenger Dog, Battle of Verdun WWI, 1916, and K9 Nemo, Tan Son Nhut Airbase, Vietnam, 1966. In Afghanistan, MWD Dyngo, 2010, MWD Bronco, 2011, French MWD Fitas, 2011, and MWD Layka, 2012. The services rendered by these heroes and so many before and after them gave us all pause to stop and remember the absolute devotion of our military working dogs."

"After demos of obedience, protection, and detection, we adjourned to the office for lunch, which consisted of Firehouse subs, chips, fruit, and of course, a cake to celebrate K9 Veterans Day."

We would like to thank the Navy handlers and their MWD partners for their continuing service and for a fantastic visit.

Top left: OFC Torrez with MWD JoJo, MA2 Garcia with MWD Lars, MA2 Peterson with MWD Sarah, Vietnam Dog Handler Ernie Ayala, Volunteer Jan Slotar, MA2 Chandler with MWD Dallas, and MA3 Harris with MWD Alexa.

Top right: MA2 Peterson and MWD Sarah.

Center left: During a dog demonstration, the "perp" did not respond to instructions by the handler and tried to flee the scene. Shown in the photo are the decoy, MA2 Jarnberg, MWD Sarah, MA2 Peterson.

Bottom Right: MA2 Chandler and MWD Dallas

Bottom left: Each base visit is unique and Jan's included items specifically for Navy handlers such as the US Navy dog bowls and bandanas.

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MWD TSA Spreads Message continued from page 13

Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam– Story by Linda Costa-Bryan and photos by Linda Costa-Bryan and Shawn England

Meanwhile, another 2,500 miles further west, volunteer Linda Costa-Bryan was hosting two vet techs from the Army and an Army veterinarian on her base visit. "We were warmly greeted by TSgt. White, the Kennel Master, and his team. We showed up with enough food to feed an army, or at least the Navy and Air Force, which were the two branches represented at JBPHH. Many willing hands helped us unload our cars, I think, drawn by the smell of food."

After a tour of the kennel facility, which is about to undergo a major remodel this summer with more space being made for the dogs and their housing, an agility demonstration was put on by MA2 Christopher Rivera and his MWD Asta. We had supported them on their last deployment with our Q1 care package and they were very appreciative. "Those of us who were willing to do so got to put on a bite suit and be apprehended by a dog. What fun!"

After many questions, talking and, educating on both sides, it was time to eat. "I have never seen food disappear so quickly. We supplied pizza, a cake, soda and all of the necessary items for an enjoyable, relaxing meal. Far too quickly it was time to get back to work for everyone but I think that we were a hit. We have been invited back anytime we wish!"

"Everyone was most appreciative of the gifts MWD TSA brought for both the handlers and their dogs. We also got to meet the new Kennel Master, Chief Jones. I even presented our challenge coin without dropping it, my biggest fear!"

Top left: A Navy dog is told to stop on the A Frame.

Top right: Linda Costa-Bryan wears the suit.

Center: Shawn England gears up.

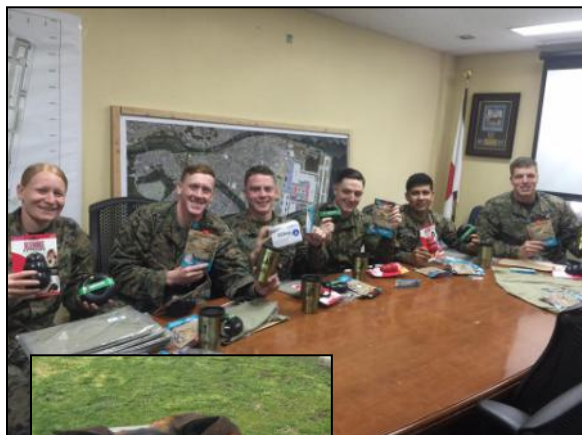
Bottom right: Shawn catches a dog.

Bottom left: Our guest, a vet-tech-in-training, gets his first "working view" of an Air Force dog.



MWD TSA Spreads Message continued on page 15

MWD TSA Spreads Message continued from page 14



Iwakuni, Japan- Story and photos by Hailey Jane Lowe

The last of the five base visits was almost another 4,000 miles further northwest on the island nation of Japan. The kennel visit for Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan was attended by Hailey Jane Lowe and her husband, Spencer.

The kennel at MCAS Iwakuni is located in the Provost Marshall's Office Building in the center of the base. The kennel is upstairs on the second floor and there is an outdoor area for the kennel, which the kennel-master informed me is the only kennel in the Marine Corps with a second-floor recreation deck for the K9s.

"We were able to spend some time playing fetch with two of the K9s: Max, who is nine years old and, due to hip dysplasia, retiring soon, and Azra, who is ten years old and just as energetic as can be. The other dogs that we met include Zoran, a four year-old German shepherd, Ddelia, a four year old Belgian malinois, Sophia, a two year old Belgian malinois, and Xxcaliber, a two year old Belgian malinois and the newest addition to the kennel, having arrived just three weeks ago."

After touring the rest of the kennel space, we went with the handlers into a conference room to present them with their gifts. This was exciting for MWD TSA as well as the handlers, as Iwakuni is now the first kennel to receive Goughnuts from our organization! The handlers were very excited about these toys and eager to test out their durability with the dogs.

We were able to talk to the handlers and kennel master about the exciting changes to come to the kennel. MCAS Iwakuni is about to experience a major expansion in regards to personnel on-board the air station, and the kennel will soon be moved from the Provost Marshall's Office to an area nearer the recreation fields and the veterinary facility. This will provide the kennel easier access to training areas and care for the dogs, and eliminate time spent in the car transporting the K9s around base. The kennel is also going to increase in size, and will have at least twice the kennel runs that it currently has.

The handlers and I are very eager to continue working together to provide assistance to their beloved K9 partners.

The first base visit at MCAS Iwakuni was a definite success, as were all five base visits in celebration of K9 Veterans Day. After nearly 8,000 miles logged in honor of our dog teams, meeting handlers who had previously received care packages, making new connections and sharing so many gifts, we are thrilled with the results.

Congratulations, team.

Top Photo: Some of the kennel staff join volunteer Hailey for a round of gift opening. Included in the items supplied to this kennel were KONGs and Goughnuts, dog treats and, even thermometers for the dogs. Each handler was presented a T-shirt and a mug. We also provided lunch for all of the personnel present.

Second Photo: MWD XXcaliber keeps a wary eye over the Goughnut presented to him for the very first time. This kennel is "test driving" the Goughnuts.

Third Photo: MWD Max shows off his love of fetch in the exercise yard.

Bottom Photo: MWD Sophia adores her Goughnut toy.

Sit. Stay. Support.

MWD TSA

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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!



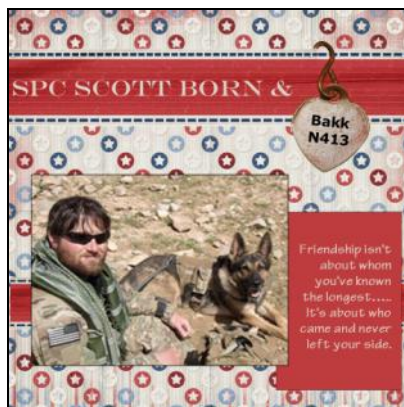
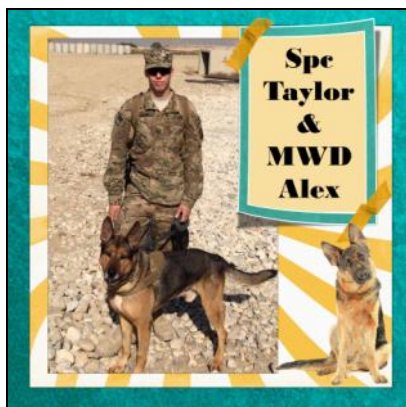
We invite you to join the ever-growing MWD TSA family!

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

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

From the Archives

K9 Veterans Day



Last year we celebrated K9 Veterans Day with a digital scrapbook with photos supplied by the dog handlers themselves. In a flashback to last year, we are highlighting the service of three dog teams:

SPC Taylor and MWD Alex.

SPC Born and MWD Bakk. (If you visited our Facebook page on March 7th you may have seen the video of when Bakk went home with his dad after adoption.)

SGT Sharp and MWD Saba.