

August 2016
Award Winning
Monthly Newsletter

Volume 8, Issue 8

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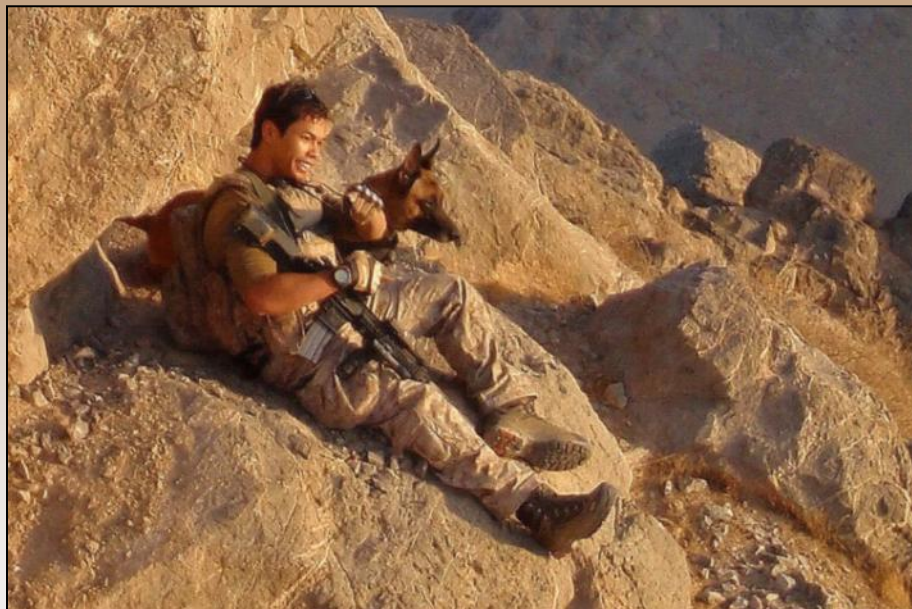
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MWDTSA touches the lives of dogs and people near and far. This month our articles and photos take us from the safety of Germany, South Carolina, Texas, and Colorado to a harrowing night mission in Afghanistan. Our archived photo is from World War II and the China-Burma-India theatre.

Subscribe to see where
we connect next month!

Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

MWDTSA KENNEL TALK



*Naval Special Warfare handler John Douangdara and partner, Bart,
in the mountains of Afghanistan.*

John Douangdara: A Tribute

Story by Dixie Whitman, photo courtesy of Chan Douangdara Follen

Petty Officer 1st Class John Douangdara, the 26-year-old son of Laotian immigrants, was among the 31 American service personnel killed on August 6, 2011. The Chinook helicopter on which he rode with his combat assault dog, Bart, was shot down by a rocket-propelled grenade in Wardak Province, Afghanistan. More information about this incident and other victims is found later in this issue.

Described by his siblings as both geeky and quiet, John's love of the military pushed him to graduate from his South Sioux City, Nebraska high school a semester early. He attended the Navy's basic training at the Great Lakes, Illinois training center. His drive and determination earned him an assignment to the Naval Special Warfare Unit where he served as a dog handler in support of Navy SEAL Team Six.

Becoming a dog handler was not John's original goal. He aspired to work on a nuclear

submarine, but John shelved that idea when he realized his true passion for dogs.

Petty Officer 1st Class Douangdara's decorations include: the Purple Heart, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Bronze Star with "V" Device, the Joint Service Commendation Medal with "V" Device, the Army Commendation Medal, the Presidential Unit Citation (2), the Good Conduct Medal (2), the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal (3), the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Medal, the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon (3), the Overseas Service Deployment Ribbon (3), the Rifle Marksmanship Medal, and the Pistol Marksmanship Medal.

John Douangdara is buried in the hallowed acres of Section 60, in Arlington National Cemetery. This issue of Kennel Talk is dedicated to the memory of John and Bart, along with John's family, friends, and the Special Operations dog teams.

Five Years Without My Brother, John

By Chan Douangdara Follen

Photos courtesy of Chan Douangdara Follen

August 6th will mark five years without MA1 John Douangdara in our lives. He, along with so many other heroes, lost his life that tragic day on August 6, 2011. As I reflect back on how life has marched on without him, I realize what an exhausting toll it has taken on our family. But we are resilient. While no one wants to contemplate life without a loved one, life must still go on.

I recently came upon a quote (by the artist Banksy) that I will carry with me to my last breath: "You die twice. One time when you stop breathing and a second time, a bit later on, when somebody says your name for the last time." Not a day passes that I don't think about my brother, my hero. As a family, we keep John in our hearts by honoring his sacrifice and sharing the happy memories we have of him. John now has a niece, a nephew, another nephew due in October, and who knows how many more down the road. Even though the children will never meet their uncle, our family is making sure they know him. John's life may have ended, but his legacy will live on in our family forever.

Through all of the darkness of John's loss, there has been light. We have gained so many new friends, some of whom we now consider family. We have been blessed with wonderful stories and hilarious anecdotes that we may have never known. We also know that John has four beautiful children named after him. Even Bart and Toby, his last two beloved dogs, have namesakes! I have no doubt in my mind that John and his two faithful partners live on in all those who now proudly carry their names.

The MWD handler community throughout this country has been extremely supportive of our family. Fellow handlers have shared even more stories about John that we never knew. For instance, I learned something through social media. I posted a photo of John flashing his huge, contagious smile on his memorial page on Facebook. Someone commented on the image, explaining that it was taken at an Iron Dog competition. John had been running with someone else's dog and been bitten. Nonetheless, he had just kept on smiling and kept on shooting.



Left: John Douangdara during an Iron Dog competition. He ran the competition with someone else's dog and was bitten, but never lost his infectious smile.

Below: John's family, in particular, his older sister Chan, has worked tirelessly to honor his memory, along with the other 30 Heroes of Extortion 17.



Left: Chan presents the State of Nebraska's proclamation to Offutt AFB Kennel Master, TSgt Pevestorf, in June of 2012 at an MWD TSA Base Visit.

John's memory now lives on in our hometown, as well. Our family was able to raise a statue in honor of John and Bart in the John Douangdara War Dog Memorial Park here in South Sioux City, Nebraska. I don't think this tribute would have been possible without the support of the tight-knit MWD handler community.

All of us who knew and loved John are so deeply grateful to those who contributed to the erection of the statue. We now have a place to go to commemorate special holidays, or just to reflect on ordinary days when we're missing John. To all who knew him, seeing the statue is bittersweet. We are so proud of all he did and

sacrificed for this great country, but we also ache as we continue life without him.

Rest in peace, John, my brother, my hero.

Note: MWD TSA is honored to have Chan among our MWD TSA family and are both saddened at the loss of someone so dear to her, yet appreciative of the sacrifices that are made over and over again by military families.

Five Years Without John continued on page 3.

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Above: On left is Navy SEAL Kevin Houston, on right, John Douangdara holding his beloved partner, Bart. All were killed aboard Extortion 17.



John Douangdara and Toby, another Special Warfare Dog handled by John. Toby was killed during previous actions in Afghanistan.



Above left: John and Bart are remembered at the John Douangdara War Dog Memorial Park in his hometown of South Sioux City, Nebraska.

The memorial dog park spearheaded by John's sister, Chan Douangdara Follen, is located on the banks of the Missouri River in South Sioux City, Nebraska at Siouxland Freedom Park.



Left: MWD Bart's official DoD photo.

Above: John Douangdara official DoD photo.

Extortion 17: Five Years Later

By Dixie Whitman

Five years ago on the eve of August 6th, two Chinook CH-47 helicopters departed a dusty Forward Operating Base (FOB) near Kabul, Afghanistan heading towards the Tangi Valley of Wardak Province. Unbeknownst at the time, the mission would ultimately result in a loss of life greater than any other single event of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The original flights ferried a platoon of the Army's 75th Ranger Regiment to the walled village of Juy Zarin, lured to the lush banks of the Tangi Wardak River by the Taliban targets of Qari Tahir, a senior Taliban chief, and his followers.

The two Chinooks, with call signs Extortion 16 and Extortion 17 landed side by side at a predetermined landing zone and the Rangers dashed into a nearby compound. After offloading the Rangers, the two Chinook transport choppers immediately departed, heading back to their FOB for refueling and awaiting orders to extract, evacuate or reinforce the 75th Rangers, as necessary. After clearing the first landing zone with live fire, the over-watch Apache choppers, and a C130 gunship moved off to watch for any fighters coming to reinforce or trying to leave the battle space.

With superior technology, the U.S. Forces in the air observed through their night vision goggles, many new fighting groups forming and called for an Immediate Reaction Force (IRF) to support the 75th Rangers. The IRF included SEAL team members, Navy special operations personnel, Afghan National Army commandos, a translator, and a combat assault dog, Bart. The IRF would be landing in a new landing zone, capable of accommodating only one Chinook chopper at a time, so they all loaded onto Extortion 17 to get everyone on the ground quickly. Extortion 16 was not involved in the next phase, but stood by to assist, if needed.

Heading into the Tangi Valley on their second flight of the night, the flight of Extortion 17 was about to enter the most dangerous part of their flight, the landing.

Around 0235 in the morning of August 6th, 2011, an infrared spotlight shined on the landing zone, visible only to those with night vision goggles. The Ranger Regiment called out that the landing zone was



A U.S. Army CH-47 Chinook helicopter assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, like this one, was shot down over Afghanistan at 2:30 AM on August 6, 2011. These Chinooks are modified to meet the special needs of the 160th "Night Stalkers". Photo by Tech. Sgt. Henry Hoegen

clear. Extortion 17 was going in for a landing.

As Extortion 17 was setting down, an unseen duo or perhaps a trio, of enemy fighters made their way to the top of a nearby two story building, carrying RPG launchers. Their first shot missed the mark, however, a second shot hit one of the chopper's rear blades, causing a catastrophic imbalance and resulting in the loss of the helicopter and all of the souls on board. It was the worst loss of life of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Extortion 16, the second Chinook, was able to extract the Ranger Regiment, however in the crash of Extortion 17, the following American souls were lost:

- Lieutenant Commander (SEAL) Jonas B. Kelsall, 32, of Shreveport, Louisiana
- Special Warfare Operator Master Chief Petty Officer (SEAL) Louis J. Langlais, 44, of Santa Barbara, California
- Special Warfare Operator Senior Chief Petty Officer (SEAL) Thomas A. Ratzlaff, 34, of Green Forest, Arkansas
- Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician Senior Chief Petty Officer (Expeditionary Warfare Specialist/Freefall Parachutist) Kraig M. Vickers 36, of Kokomo, Hawaii
- Special Warfare Operator Chief Petty Officer (SEAL) Brian R. Bill, 31, of Stam-

ford, Connecticut

- Special Warfare Operator Chief Petty Officer (SEAL) John W. Faas, 31, of Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Special Warfare Operator Chief Petty Officer (SEAL) Kevin A. Houston, 35, of West Hyannisport, Massachusetts
- Special Warfare Operator Chief Petty Officer (SEAL) Matthew D. Mason, 37, of Kansas City, Missouri
- Special Warfare Operator Chief Petty Officer (SEAL) Stephen M. Mills, 35, of Fort Worth, Texas
- Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician Chief Petty Officer Nicholas H. Null, 30, of Washington, West Virginia
- Special Warfare Operator Chief Petty Officer (SEAL) Robert J. Reeves, 32, of Shreveport, Louisiana
- Special Warfare Operator Chief Petty Officer (SEAL) Heath M. Robinson, 34, of Detroit, Michigan
- Special Warfare Operator Petty Officer 1st Class (SEAL) Darrik C. Benson, 28, of Angwin, California
- Special Warfare Operator Petty Officer 1st Class (SEAL/Parachutist) Christopher G. Campbell, 36, of Jacksonville, North Carolina
- Information Systems Technician Petty

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Officer 1st Class, Jared W. Day, 28, of Taylorsville, Utah

- Cryptologist Technician Petty Officer 1st Class Michael J. Strange, 25, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

- Special Warfare Operator Petty Officer 1st Class (SEAL/Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist) Jon T. Tumilson, 35, of Rockford, Iowa

- Special Warfare Operator Petty Officer 1st Class (SEAL) Aaron C. Vaughn, 30, of Stuart, Florida

- Special Warfare Operator Petty Officer 1st Class (SEAL) Jason R. Workman, 32, of Blanding, Utah

- Special Warfare Operator Petty Officer 1st Class (SEAL) Jesse D. Pittman, 27, of Ukiah, California

- Special Warfare Operator Petty Officer 2nd Class (SEAL) Nicholas P. Spehar, 24, of Saint Paul, Minnesota

- Chief Warrant Officer David R. Carter, 47, of Centennial, Colorado

- Chief Warrant Officer Bryan J. Nichols, 31, of Hays, Kansas

- Staff Sgt. Patrick D. Hamburger, 30, of Lincoln, Nebraska

- Sgt. Alexander J. Bennett, 24, of Tacoma, Washington

- Spc. Spencer C. Duncan, 21, of Olathe, Kansas

- Tech. Sgt. John W. Brown, 33, of Tallahassee, Florida

- Staff Sgt. Andrew W. Harvell, 26, of Long Beach, California

- Tech. Sgt. Daniel L. Zerbe, 28, of York, Pennsylvania

- Master-at-Arms Petty Officer 1st Class (Expeditionary Warfare Specialist) John Douangdara, 26, of South Sioux City, Nebraska, who served as the dog handler, and,

- A Combat Assault Dog named Bart.

Seven Afghan National Army commandos and one Afghan civilian interpreter were also killed in the crash.

The following month, September of 2011, Qari Tahir, the suspected Taliban chief,



Above: U.S. Army CH-47F Chinook helicopter executes a dust landing under night vision. DoD Courtesy photo.



Austin Williams visits the gravesite of U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Christopher G. Campbell in Section 60 of Arlington National Cemetery. Campbell was one of 31 Americans killed in the Extortion 17 crash. U.S. Army photo by Rachel Larue

their target on August 6th, was killed during a raid.

Many lessons have been learned, but following a complete review, no blame could be assigned to any individual or specific decision. Constrained rules of engagement in place, at the time, may have been a contributing factor.

Now, a larger role played by drones in pre-operation intelligence may help reduce these kinds of disasters as drones can garner data and images for days or even weeks preceding events with regards to the count of insurgents in an area and the types of weaponry they have available.

In their honor, we ask you to please join us in remembering these 31 heroes on August 6th, each of whom left behind families, friends, fellow brothers-in-arms and the American public to mourn them.

A tattoo on the arm of one of the heroes read:

"When I get to Heaven,
to Saint Peter I will tell,
"Just another soldier reporting, Sir.
I've served my time in hell."

31 Heroes: 30 human and one special K9.

Thanks to our great donors

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

Betsy Ross Foundation, Inc. Paris, Tenn.
 Stanton Bost
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 Francis Murch
 Laurie Newton
 San Francisco Bay Gourmet Coffee,
 Lincoln, California
 Stephen Redden
 RexSpecs Jackson, Wyoming
 Richard Snyder
 Christa Ursini
 Jerry and Dixie Whitman
 Kathie Woodring



Please help us support our dog teams by donating funding or a couple of items from our Amazon Wish List. See article below for links to the list showcasing:

The Nero Ball (shown above) and

Blackbeard's Revenge Coffee

The Ball's In Your Court. (So is the Coffee.)

We still need your help. Our 3rd Quarter Care Packages will be heading out in late August/early September and we are still a significant count short from our needed toy and coffee inventory for this box.

We need a total of 200 Nero Balls and as of the printing of this newsletter, we have 47, which means we still need 153 of these bad boys. Nero balls are made by a newcomer to the dog toy industry, but these have been toy-tested and GSD/malinois approved and we are excited to share them in our upcoming care packages.

We are also still needing 177 packages of the wonderful coffee, "Blackbeard's Re-

venge." This coffee is strong enough to walk the plank on its own and with the pirate skull design it is a perfect fit for our "Talk Like A Pirate" care packages.

To order the coffee or the Nero Ball, please stop by our Amazon Wish List and order several of these items. When ordering the Nero balls, please apply the special discount code of MWD TSA16 to save \$1.60 on each ball ordered.

Stop by and check out our Amazon Wish List at one of these links:

For PC: [Amazon Wish List](#)

For Mac/Android: [Amazon Wish List](#)



United States Postage Stamp Campaign

Dear Fellow Dog Lovers:

I have volunteered to chair a committee whose objective is to get a MWD postage stamp issued. This was attempted years ago by hard working VDHA members (Vietnam Dog Handlers Assn.) and others who submitted many thousands of signatures (I was told over 100,000) only to get rejected by the issuance committee. So this appears to be a very difficult task with two things in our way, a tough approval committee and competition from other interest groups with the same objective. To counter this I believe we need a multi-level approach, one that will leave no stone unturned making it a proposal that will be difficult to decline. As 3/13 is now "K9 Veterans Day" this will be the theme. There was a series of four stamps issued honoring dogs several years ago (MWD, Service) so they could use that as an excuse to decline our proposal i.e. "We already did a stamp on dogs."

Volunteers are needed! If you are interested or have relatives or friends that would like to get involved please contact me at billdoiron@verizon.net. Again I must stress that we should be deliberate, organized and so impressive that it will make it very difficult to ignore us. This will take some time and once we get our cadre of volunteers we will work on a regular communication cycle with updates, ideas, etc. Several avenues to pursue:

1. Political-We need the help of federal and

local representatives. I will be contacting my congressman (Steve Lynch) to see if his office will get actively involved. There are three U.S. Senators that I will try to also contact on this (my son is an aide to one of them). There is also another congressman here in Mass. Seth Moulton, who is a Iraq War Vet (Marines). Saying this there could be a problem as this is an election year, so it could be tough getting in front of them right now.

Thirteen or more states have recognized "K9 Veterans Day". This took the initiative of local and state politicians in these respective states for this to happen. We could use their help on this. If your state is one of these, try to contact the folks that were involved in filing the bill, or if you just want to forward the information to me please do.

Media-I believe we should use the media to our advantage. Many members of the media love dogs (who doesn't- almost 50 million people in the U.S. have a dog). We could use a communications director if anyone is interested. More on this later.

2. Education-Trudy Debolt, a middle school teacher and VDHA member has volunteered to be our National Education Coordinator. Her students have studied the vital roles our dogs have had and has a group of kids raring to go on this. If you know any education groups that might be interested in getting involved please contact Trudy at tdebolt@mvcisd.us. I think



the kids can help us with their enthusiasm, optimism and knowledge of social media, something us old folks lack from time to time.

3. Organizations-VFW, American Legion, DAV, current K9 law enforcement groups, the list is endless. I believe if we can get a large number of these groups involved it will send a strong message to the stamp committee to take us seriously. If you know any of the "higher ups" in these or other groups who can help, please contact them or relay the information. Strategies on this will be forthcoming.

In closing, this will not be an easy task, but we owe it to the dogs past and present who have left a legacy we can never forget. Please consider helping and hope all is well. Bill Doiron

Note: Bill is a MWD TSA volunteer and we will be continuing to update you on any actions you can take to assist.

Is Love In the Air?

Our quarterly care packages come with an extra bonus. Handlers who are kind enough to supply photos of their dogs receiving the boxes have entries submitted into a contest. Photos are selected at random to win an extra bonus prize for the dogs.

In 2nd Quarter, MWD Camo, a black Labrador retriever, was the runner up for our Q2 photo contest and won a pair of RexSpecs. Her handler subsequently sent in a photo of Camo modeling her new RexSpecs.

Her photo piqued the interest of Brutus, a family member of one of our Board of Directors. Brutus "inquired" about being

pen-pals, Camo "requested" his photo and we are wondering if love is in the air.

Continue to follow us on our Social Media outlets—Facebook and Twitter—to see if Camo and Brutus' friendship blossoms.

Right: MWD Camo in RexSpecs.

Far right: Brutus, whose Dad is a Vietnam era member of an elite Combat Tracker Unit.



Military Working Dogs, Handlers Train

Story and photos by Abigail Waldrop

Fort Bliss Public Affairs

CHIHUAHUA DESERT – Getting sand up your nose is never fun, but military working dogs training for deployment were on a mission – find explosives – no matter how sandy the conditions. The Desert Defender Readiness Training Center at El Paso, Texas trains security forces Airmen before deployment and those with military working dogs receive additional training.

"The purpose of them coming here is to learn combat skills to utilize downrange," said Tech. Sgt. Michael Myers, military working dog program manager, Desert Defender Readiness Training Center. "All of our instructors here have that combat experience."

The dogs and handlers have to be able to do their jobs, in any environment. In about 90-degree heat, teams trained on roadway detection in the training area here June 10.

"We focus on roadway detection because most of the stuff we do downrange in Afghanistan and Iraq is search for IEDs (improvised explosive devices)," Myers said. "So we want to train our dog teams on roadway detection specifically in this environment where there's a lot of sand, the heat, so they get used to working with their dog tired."

They have training classes every month and dog teams come from all over to train. This was their largest class yet, with 19 dog teams and four kennel masters.

"I try to make sure that they can recognize their dog's change of behavior on explosives," said Tech Sgt. Franklin Walton, K-9 instructor, who has six deployments under his belt. "I want to make sure the handlers can recognize it before the dog alerts."

To do that, instructors sometimes place training aids in a location the handler knows, but the dog doesn't, so the handler learns their dog's behavior as the dog finds it.

"The dog handler and the dog have to learn how to work together. It's a team effort. The dog cannot be doing everything by himself and the handler can't be doing

Right: Tech. Sgt. John Whisman, left, K9 instructor, briefs Senior Airman Paul Little, 27th Special Operations Security Forces Squadron, Cannon Air Force Base, N.M. about the roadway detection lane he and his MWD Jackson must complete during training near Fort Bliss, Texas.

everything by himself," said Tech. Sgt. John Whisman, K-9 instructor. "So they have to come together as a team, build that rapport, bond, foundation and obviously work as a team to find explosives."

Senior Airman Paul Little was figuring out that teamwork piece during the training. As a new dog handler, he said he has learned a lot, some of it from his MWD Jackson.

"I've only been a handler just under six months," Little said, who is assigned to the 27th Special Operations Security Forces Squadron, Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico. "Working with him is a blast. He's an older dog; he's going to be eight this August. He shows me more than what I show him."

It was just day five of 27 training days for the teams here, but the Desert Defenders have already had them working hard, doing a two-mile ruck march in full gear, in the middle of the day to acclimate the dogs to the heat.

"Yesterday with the ruck he (Jackson) did really well, we only had to stop twice throughout the entire day. I thought he was going to be a little more smoked than what he was," Little said. "He beasted through it and his nose is one of the best out here, I think, but that's me being biased."

Air Force dog teams do a variety of missions and many times work with Army or Special Forces units. The training course here is designed to prepare them for any deployment.

"It's going to help them survive, but it's also going to save them the lives of the platoon or squad that's behind them," Myers said. "We take the lead on most of our patrols, because we have a dog that finds explosives ... saving those patrols from stepping on IEDs, helping the mission succeed."



Below: Senior Airman Paul Little checks the roadway for simulated explosives with his MWD Jackson.



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Military Dogs Train continued from page 8



Above: Jackson, a military working dog assigned to Cannon Air Force Base, N.M. completes training.



Above: Staff Sgt. Patrick Nault, 45th Security Forces Squadron, Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., carries his military working dog, Ivar.



Above: Staff Sgt. Patrick Nault, and his MWD, Ivar, conduct roadway detection training.



Above: Staff Sgt. Patrick Nault gives his MWD, Ivar, a drink of water during training.



Above: Ivar is released from his alert after detecting a simulated explosive during training.



Above: Ivar alerts on a simulated explosive during training.

A Dog and His Handler

Story and photos by AIC Dennis Hoffman

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. The strength of a working relationship can grow exponentially when, at the office, a co-worker jumps all around his cage recklessly wagging his tail, ready to cover faces with big, fat, sloppy kisses.

That is the reality for a military working dog handler in the 21st Security Forces Squadron.

Senior Airman Tariq Russell and his dog, Ppaul, rely on the relationship they developed with each other to create a safe working environment while protecting Airmen at Peterson Air Force Base.

Thanks partly to his father, Russell's love for dogs began when he was a young boy growing up in Southern California.

"Since I can remember, my father has been breeding dogs," Russell said. "We had around 20 dogs in my backyard at any given time and because of that upbringing – that's what interested me most about being a military working dog handler and working with these dogs."

Conversely, Russell pointed out that his passion for dogs had some growing to do in the beginning.

"The first dog that I had growing up was a Rottweiler," Russell said. "I was absolutely terrified of it at first. However, once I got more exposed to dogs and became more

accustomed to them, that's when my fascination took off and it was just a whole other experience from then on."

Fast forward to February 2016 and Russell is now a graduate of canine school and a fully certified MWD handler. He was ecstatic to learn about the dog that would accompany him during every working hour from here on out, he said.

"When I asked about when I was going to get my dog, I was told by my flight chief that the dog I would be assigned to was super independent and tough," Russell said. "He likes to boss people around and wants to be in charge. They said it was going to be a while."

Russell said he knew from the moment he met Ppaul, his MWD, he was in for a challenge.

"He had a stigma about him," Russell said. "He was aggressive and would bite you if you tried to correct him. He wasn't very handler friendly when I first got him."

After many bites, hours of training and hundreds of corrections, Ppaul began to show signs of growth. The bond was there, and it was only a matter of time before it became unbreakable, he said. Russell knew there was only one more test before he knew he had the trust of Ppaul.

"I was told that he didn't like to be picked up," Russell said. "I promised myself never to do it because I was told he would bite your face if you tried. I don't know why,

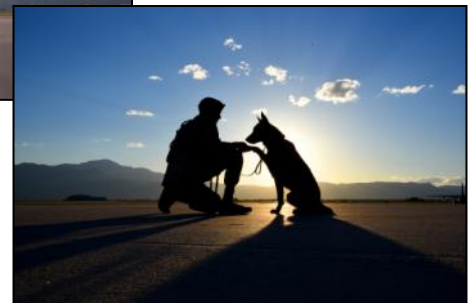
but one day I thought to myself 'I'm going to try it,' so I picked him up. To my surprise, he had no reaction and responded very well. From that day, I knew we would make an amazing MWD team."

Since that day, the working relationship between Russell and Ppaul has been so stellar it was noticed by Russell's trainers and leadership team.

"I've been told a few different times that Ppaul and I work extremely well together and that we are a great fit," Russell said. "There's an unbelievable feeling that comes over me when I hear that. I just think back to the day when I was told he was going to be a hard dog to work with and knowing firsthand how much we have grown together – I feel lucky."

Sadly, Russell is scheduled to leave for Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, this fall and will have to say goodbye to Ppaul. Russell said he is already dreading leaving Ppaul behind, but he is doing his best to make sure his buddy won't be without companionship.

"I don't want him sitting in his kennel for days or weeks without anything to do," Russell said. "That's why I have been already asking my supervisors if we have a handler for him when I leave. I know he will be in good hands though. I'm just going to miss him a lot."



Left and below: Photos of SrA Russell and Ppaul training and bonding.

EmBARKing On A New Adventure

Story and photos by Michael Mascari

A Soldier reunited with her battle buddy at Fort Jackson and they will face one more mission together: retirement.

Recently retired Colonel Caryn "Suzie" Heard adopted Beno, a hard charger she knew when she served as Garrison Commander of Fort Buchanan in Puerto Rico. That hard charger was Beno, a German Shepherd, who was retiring from service as a military working dog (MWD). Heard knew Beno and his handler, Officer Efrain Laureano.

Heard relinquished her command at Fort Buchanan for a final assignment as the Legislative Liaison assigned to the 81st Regional Support Command on the same day as Beno's retirement. They would both arrive at Fort Jackson about the same time where Heard was able to complete the adoption process.

"MWD adoption is an opportunity to show our appreciation to the MWD for his service to our country by providing a loving home where he can relax during his retirement," Heard said.

Beno's final mission was to support the Pope's visit to Philadelphia before he was officially retired. Once he completed his duties, his handler brought him to the Fort Jackson kennel to wait for the final processing of the adoption paperwork.

Sgt. Weston Reeves, plans non-commissioned officer for the 208th Military Working Dog Detachment, first met Beno in Philadelphia and was one of the Soldiers working with Beno during the process at Fort Jackson. He said Beno has an excellent personality and that this is a great match.

"Beno is very friendly," Reeves said. "When we pulled him out for exercise, he just loved to play and he perked up even more when Colonel Heard came by. They have a great bond and you could definitely tell whenever she came to visit and when she came to pick him up. It's a great occasion for both, a warrior that's able to go home."

"While he was in transition at the Fort Jackson kennel, I was able to visit and start bonding with him," said Heard. "The

kennel master and handlers took great care of him until I was able to pick him up and take him home. The most difficult part of the process was waiting to get the paperwork processed."

Heard said military working dogs are prized upon their retirement from active service because they are already trained and disciplined and said she would probably adopt another one.

Those interested in adopting MWDs generally must go through an adoption process where the prospective adopters must fill out paperwork, become familiarized with the dog, and pass a screening process. The handler gets first priority, but Laureano was unable to adopt Beno and asked Heard if she was interested. Her prior familiarization with Beno and their ability to

bond assisted in the process. She was able to visit him regularly once they were both at Fort Jackson.

Heard and Beno are now embarking on their new life journey together.

"He is still trying to figure out the retirement life. He still wants to smell everything whenever we are out of the house. He enjoys playing ball the most. He is doing great. Now he can teach me how to be retired. I plan on doing nothing for as long as I can. Beno and I will probably do some traveling and relax for a while."

To find out more about Military Working Dog adoption, email mwd.adoptions@us.af.mil or call (210) 671-3153.



Above, right and below: Colonel Caryn "Suzie" Heard spends time bonding with Beno, a retired military working dog at the Fort Jackson Kennel. Heard adopted Beno through a military adoption program to place K-9s with owners after the dog retires from active service.



Coast Guard Honors Crema



Story and photos
by Petty Officer 3rd Class Amanda Norcross



Chief Petty Officer William Porter, lead dog handler assigned to Maritime Safety and Security Team Seattle 91101, carries the ashes of his partner Crema, a yellow Labrador explosives detection canine, past a line of fellow explosives detection canines and their handlers during a memorial at Coast Guard Base Seattle.

Crema died due to post-surgery complications that led to kidney failure.

Coast Guard members sat in a moment of silence during a memorial.

Chris Lewis, an explosives detection canine handler with the Port of Seattle Police Department, lays flowers on the water as part of a memorial for Crema, while underway in the Puget Sound.

Crema served as a member of MSST 91101 since July 2011, with a total of 500 hours of explosive detection enforcement across 100 explosive detection missions.

Memorial for MWD Gory, 2016 Honor 13 Recipient



MWD Gory (Left) and with his Honor 13 Care Package (Below).



We were saddened to learn that retired MWD Gory, one of MWD TSA's Honor 13 dogs from earlier this year, has passed over Rainbow Bridge.

Gory's beautiful face and loving eyes captivated all of us here at MWD TSA and we were delighted to include him in our Honor 13 gift boxes in March to celebrate K9 Veterans Day.

MWD Gory was 12 years old and had been retired for five years, being adopted in mid - 2011. He deployed twice and earned working dog of the year on Ft. Hood Army Post.

MWD Jany N544 Memorial

MWD Jany, control: MWD Jany, control: MWD Jany N544, this is control... "Control to all posts and patrols, be advised that MWD Jany has finished his last tour of duty."

Today my heart is heavy for my brothers James Evatt and Mark Devine... Last night at approximately 0200 MWD Jany N544 was laid to rest. Jany, aka Jan-Jan/Jany poo, the best Dutchie out there, was the back to back Lackland K9 Comp Champ. As one of the oldest dogs in the kennels, you would out work the youngest dog in the kennel.

At nine years young, you were feared by every new face in the kennels. There wasn't a decoy that didn't respect your capabilities. You left teeth marks on all of us, but each mark was a valuable lesson learned.

We always talked about how hard you still worked at the age of nine. You didn't get to enjoy a nice retirement and a couch.

We all wished you would've slowed down so you could retire, but some how I don't think that would've been your style. You loved work too much and pleasing your handler was all you ever wanted to do.

You loved biting the bad guy and sniffing out bombs. You were a complete bad ass: the first K9 in the building for an active shooter, attached to a SEAL team, and went on countless Secret Service missions.

You have served your country and handler the best that any Military Working Dog could. We'll miss you Jan-Jan, when you see Daysi girl give her a lick on the face and tell her we miss her, too. Run free buddy: no choke chain, no collar, no leash.. We'll take it from here. Love you, Jan Jan.



Official DoD portrait of MWD Jany N544

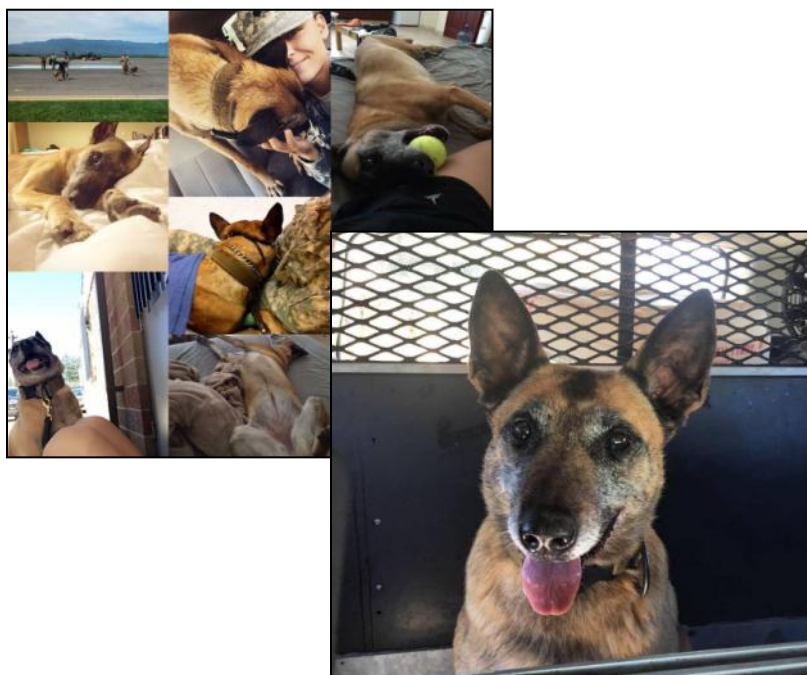
MWD Rita L289 Memorial

MWD TSA is saddened to share the news of the loss of another MWD, MWD Rita L289. MWD Rita was supported on her last deployment by MWD TSA. Please keep the handler, the kennel and all who worked with this amazing dog in your thoughts and prayers.

From the handler, Alexis Bond:

"The military views military working dogs as 'equipment' but they are much more than that. The bond you build with your MWD is unbreakable. Rita was a 10-year-old Belgian malinois trained in detection and patrol; patrol was her absolute favorite. Rita and I experienced so much together.

"We were a certified team for two years and deployed to Honduras for 9 months. Wherever I was, she was right by my side. Although at times she was very aggressive, I loved her unconditionally and she did the same. I am very grateful to have worked with such an amazing dog."



The many faces of Rita.

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

China Burma India (CBI) Dogs



A salute to the World War II heroes who gave so unselfishly of themselves. Wally Katnich and Rex are pictured above during their training time at Fort Robinson in northwestern Nebraska. They later were on a harrowing sea-crossing, leaving California and landing in Calcutta, India over ten weeks later.

Cpl. Katnich and Rex were among the dog teams assisting Merrill's Marauders.

The CBI War Dog Detachment was formed late October, 1943, at the War Dog Reception and Training Center, San Carlos, California and consisted of men and dogs trained at the four major training camps: San Carlos, California; Fort Robinson, Nebraska; Cat Island, Mississippi; and Front Royale, Virginia. Training was focused on sentry and scouting work.

After training these teams were sent to Long Beach, California to board a Liberty Ship for a long trek across a treacherous ocean to Calcutta, India where dog teams were dispersed throughout the region.

Some among the handlers served with Merrill's Marauders, Mars Task Force, Air Force asset protection, Ammo Ordnance, Signal Corps, Military Police, and OSS Detachment 101 in both Burma and China.

