

December, 2016
Award Winning
Monthly Newsletter

Volume 8, Issue 12

Support MWDTSA now
and you won't miss any of
the photos, stories, news,
and highlights of 2017!

Kennel Talk is a free,
digital MWD publication.

Inside this issue:

| | |
|--|----|
| Call To Support | 1 |
| Kennel Talk Wins Award | 2 |
| Tank Drops the Puck | 3 |
| Nemo's Legacy at 50 | 5 |
| The Ice Dawgs Cometh | 7 |
| Caring for Charleston's Furry Friends | 9 |
| Donors | 10 |
| Remembering John Douangdara | 10 |
| Kongs for K9's | 11 |
| Buckley AFB Visit | 12 |
| Ft. Benning Visit | 14 |
| Parting Shots | 16 |

MWDTSA touches the lives of dogs and people near and far. This month we are asking for your help for our "10 for 10" campaign to support both ends of the leash for K9 teams deployed around the world. This issue's articles and photos take us from the history of Nemo in Vietnam to preparing care packages in Georgia and visiting Buckley AFB in Colorado. Our care packages make it around the world to nooks and crannies wherever our teams are deployed.

Our parting shot is retired MWD Mica at Tyndall AFB. Subscribe to see where we connect next month!

Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

MWDTSA KENNEL TALK



**"10 for 10" Campaign Helps MWDTSA Celebrate 10 Years
of Supporting Both Ends of the Leash
Photo of MWD Denny, taken by Corporal Suzette Clemans**

Call To Support

Story by Nikki Rohrig

During 2016, MWDTSA care packages were sent to 648 deployed teams, bringing the total to almost 4,200 care packages sent to our deployed MWD teams since our founding in 2006. During 2017, we plan to expand our reach to new kennels and new handlers.

To do this, we are in need of your help. MWDTSA is challenging each of our supporters to pledge \$10 in our "10 for 10" campaign! Will you donate \$10 to celebrate our 10th year of supporting both ends of the leash? Your \$10 donation will help us purchase a toy for a MWD or a t-shirt for a handler. Your donation is like the threads of a cable; each one makes it stronger and better able to bear additional weight.

We now count over 60 board members and volunteers among our ranks, we live in 23 states and none of us take a salary, nor do we employ professional fundraisers. When we travel for a base visit or care packing event, none of us are reimbursed for travel expenses. MWDTSA wants every penny we get to go right into the hands and paws of the teams that we support.

In addition to sending care packages to deployed teams, MWDTSA conducted 16 base visits in the U.S.A. this year and took almost \$9,000 worth of gifts to the 219 MWD teams visited. Our gifts included t-shirts, coffee mugs, KONG toys, tactical patches, thermometers and a 2nd toy option for the MWD, such as a ChuckIt Fumble Fetch Football or a Jolly Egg.

MWD teams are spread across the globe and our mission is to support them, wherever they are deployed. This would not be possible without our generous in-kind product donors. We encourage you to visit the sponsor section of our website at www.mwdtsa.org and support these donors by purchasing their products. The best thank you that they can get is for our supporters to give back to them for supporting our hard-working MWD teams. Be sure to let them know you appreciate their donation to MWDTSA and our MWD teams.

Call To Support continued on page 2

www.mwdtsa.org

Call To Support continued from page 1

You can visit the donate page on our website to make a monetary donation or to view other ways to support us on an ongoing basis throughout 2017. Please use the "#10for10" hashtag on social media to let your family & friends know that you're supporting a nonprofit that impacts MWD teams throughout the world.

MWD TSA is thankful for the continued generosity of the companies and individuals that help us support both ends of the leash. On behalf of our entire team of volunteers, we wish you a happy holiday season and a Happy New Year!



MWD TSA is proud to announce we have achieved GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency this year. We are committed to the highest level of ethics in everything that we do and the Platinum Seal is the highest ranking that a nonprofit can achieve at GuideStar.com. Currently, less than one percent of nonprofits have this ranking. GuideStar is the world's largest source of information on non profit organizations and you can view our profile on their website at www.guidestar.com.

Kennel Talk Wins Newsletter Award

In October 2016, the German Shepherd Dog Club of America, Inc. held its National Specialty Show at Purina Farms in Grey Summit, MO. During the festivities, the club presented MWD TSA with our fourth Special Newsletter Award in recognition of our publication, *Kennel Talk*.

MWD TSA is honored and thrilled to once again receive this beautiful black and red inscribed rosette. We take great pride in the quality of our communication piece. Over the last eight years, *Kennel Talk* has grown from a quarterly newsletter to a monthly publication that draws outstanding volunteer writers, editors, proofreaders, and publishers.

Please share this latest copy of *Kennel Talk* with a friend. For a personal and free digital subscription, visit our website <http://mwdtsa.org/> and click on the link for *Kennel Talk*.



Volunteers Beate Frank (l) and Lisa Eiser (r) celebrate the receipt of the special newsletter award. Please look for Lisa's first *Kennel Talk* article in this issue.

Tank Drops the Puck



Tank drops the puck for the University of Georgia vs. Auburn University game on Nov. 4 in Athens, Ga.

Story by Dick Baumer
Photos by Ashley Rosenberg

Friday, Nov 4, gave MWD TSA Board-Member-at-Large Allison Merrill a short time to work with Tank, her "step-dog," to hold a hockey puck and then drop it on command. Tank got the idea quickly, although he also thought they were chew toys and 4 or 5 pucks were shredded in the training process.

That night under Merrill's direction, Tank was the star of the opening "puck drop" as the University of Georgia Ice Dawgs hosted the Auburn Tigers at the Akins Ford rink in Athens, Ga. to cheers from the crowd. Tank was joined on the ice by MWD TSA board members who were invited to participate by the UGA Hockey Foundation in honor of the MWD TSA's 10th Anniversary.

"Tank's drop was easily the coolest puck drop I have ever been a part of," said Alex Carey, UGA team captain. "It was an hon-

or to have that dog at the game and all of us at UGA Hockey would like to thank our service men and women for everything they sacrifice for us to enjoy the freedoms that we do," he added.

Thanks to David Brooks, a board member of the UGA Hockey Foundation, and "Bubba Dan" McAllister, the official team embroiderer, the November MWD TSA care packages included special Ice Dawgs team ball caps. "We were pleased to be able to help them celebrate in style," Brooks said.

Tank is the service dog of US Air Force Military Working Dog handler, Staff Sergeant Alex Baron, who is currently deployed overseas. Tank's journey to the game reflects the support the MWD TSA has provided since 2006. Just prior to an earlier deployment in April 2015, arrangements for his dog's care fell through at the last minute. Alerted to the situation, Allison Merrill, a MWD TSA board member and owner of Sun Dog Kennels in Traverse City, Mich. drove 15 hours and 1,000 miles to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base

in Goldsboro, N.C., and picked up Tank. She then drove back to Michigan where she cared for Tank in her home for the next 7 months. Upon Sergeant Baron's return in November she drove Tank back to North Carolina to greet him as he returned from overseas. Since February 2016 Tank's "Dad" has been on another overseas deployment, this time expected to be 15 months and Merrill is caring for him again.

This year Tank was treated to another road trip, to the MWD TSA's 10th Anniversary celebration in Canton, Ga. The trip included not only his puck drop debut with the Ice Dawgs but a visit to Ft. Benning, Ga. to the War Dog Memorial. He also had a chance to sniff out the U.S. Army's 904th Military Working Dog Detachment kennels and meet active duty K-9 teams, some of which are preparing for deployment overseas.

Tank Drops the Puck continued on Page 4

www.mwdtsa.org

Tank Drops the Puck continued from page 3

The sell-out game saw the Ice Dawgs chalk up another impressive win of 14-4 over the visiting Tigers. Goalie Grant Schwartz stopped 30 of 34 shots on goal by the Tigers and 7 Dawgs players each scored two goals, confirming the depth of the UGA roster. The Dawgs have a 9-0 winning streak going, toward a second consecutive SECHC title.

Dick Baumer is 1st Vice President of the MWD TSA. A retired US Army Colonel, he trained German Shepherd Scout dogs at Ft. Benning, Ga. and commanded a Combat Tracker platoon in Vietnam that employed five-man teams of visual trackers with Labrador tracking dogs.

Editor Note: Tank may have been the first dog to perform a puck drop this season, although national media reported that Nero, a Marine MWD from Camp Pendleton, Ca., did a similar drop on Sunday, November 6, two days later in Anaheim at a Ducks-Flames game. Tank and UGA were first though!



MWD Freddie sporting his Ice Dawgs cap, part of the MWD TSA 10th Anniversary Care Package.



MWD Josie and her handler model the Ice Dawgs ballcap and special t-shirt from the 10th anniversary care packages.



Left: (L to R) Parker Brown, Auburn Tigers; Allison Merrill, MWD TSA; Tank; Nikki Rohrig, MWD TSA President; Alex Carey, UGA captain.

Nemo's Legacy at 50

Story by Holly G.

It seems the news is filled these days with tragic stories of violence and loss all over the world. In peacetime or at war, vigilance is paramount to staying safe from terrorism. The watchfulness and safety provided by Military Working Dogs has proven time and again to be a key factor in protecting our troops and citizens from those who would cause harm. The events of December 4, 1966 and a heroic sentry dog named Nemo A534 demonstrate this fact.

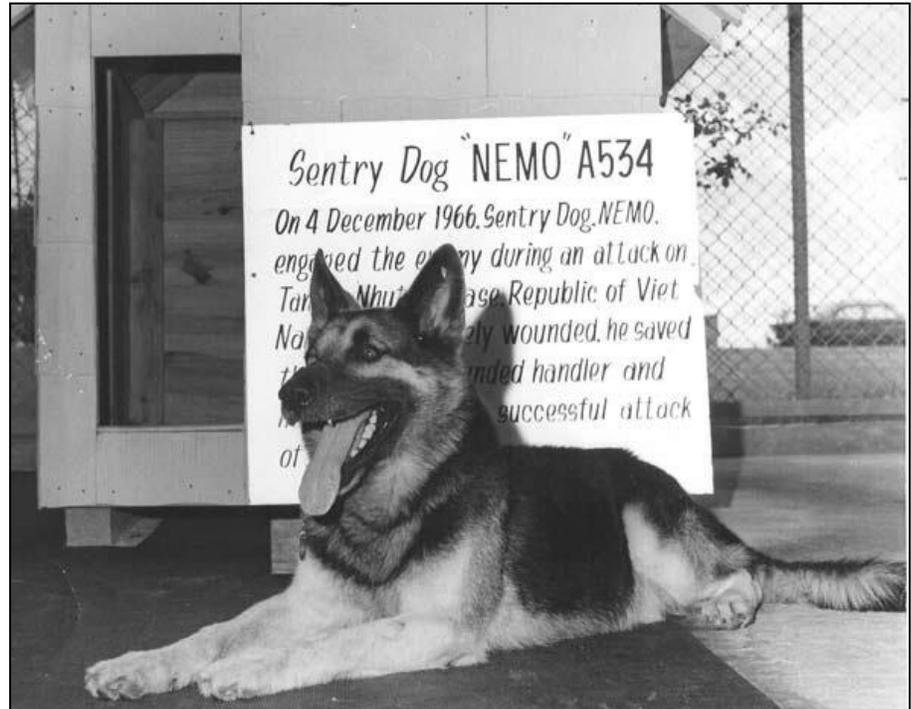
This month marks the 50th anniversary of a memorable attack on Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Vietnam. Three American servicemen and several sentry dogs were killed in this attack, but if not for the alertness and bravery of Nemo A354 and his handler Airman Robert A. Throneburg, it could have been much worse.

In the pre-dawn hours of December 4, 1966, the air base was attacked by a group of more than 60 Viet Cong commandos and sappers who breached the base perimeter and spread into smaller factions intent on causing as much property damage and harm as possible. The enemy was quickly detected and the attackers were repelled following hours of fighting and several casualties. After the remaining known attackers were seen retreating, base personnel believed the assault was over and set about caring for the wounded and assessing damage.

However, despite daytime search patrols, several VC managed to hide in the rough terrain of the base and certainly plotted a second attack aided by darkness and their position near the base's runway. It is unfortunate to note that at the time, daytime patrols did not include dog teams. Later that night, Throneburg and Nemo went on sentry duty near the airstrip and almost immediately encountered the events that would change their lives. Nemo quickly alerted on a VC who had evaded earlier detection, was released into the brush, and both sides exchanged fire.

Despite suffering a gunshot wound through the face, Nemo killed one VC and aggressively protected his wounded handler, likely saving his life in the process. With Nemo covering his body to prevent further injury, Throneburg was able to radio for help and alert other personnel to the threat. Additional searches led to the elimination of 8 more enemies on the base before the next morning.

Nemo was credited with saving his handler's life and preventing further destruction of life and property. His wounds were



Nemo in his kennel at DOD Dog Center, Lackland AFB, Texas (<http://www.vspa.com/>)
"Courtesy of Nemo's War Dog Heroes Memorial"

treated on site and despite losing an eye, he was put back on perimeter duty temporarily. It was said that his injury just heightened his senses of hearing and smell. Nemo was retired on June 23, 1967 and became the first sentry dog to be sent home to the states from Vietnam.

Nemo spent his final years living in comfort at Lackland AFB in San Antonio, Texas as a celebrity and "spokesdog" who traveled often for recruiting events. His story was shared many times as an example of how important a dog is to his handler. His handler Airman Robert Throneburg also recovered from his wounds and received two Purple Hearts and the Bronze Star Medal with the V for valor (BSV).

Nemo's story doesn't end there. In 2003, a group of Vietnam-era dog handlers visiting Lackland for a reunion saw that Nemo's kennel site was un-maintained and crumbling in obscurity. Bill Cummings, Terry Strickland, and Kelly Bate-man, all passionate about Nemo and current friends of MWD TSA, found this unacceptable. Thus began a multi-year effort of fundraising and awareness-raising to create a proper memorial for Nemo.

The memorial was dedicated on November 15, 2005 and stands today as a replica of Nemo's kennel, complete with dog house and water dish. The plaque inside the structure reads: "In remembrance of Nemo and his faithful service to the United States Armed Forces. May all who hear the story of Nemo, know the true measure of man's Best Friend."

During the dedication ceremony, Bill Cummings spoke about the legacy of Nemo and the cooperation between the "Nemo's Heroes" committee, the Vietnam Security Police Association (VSPA), Vietnam Dog Handler Association (VDHA), and the members of SSD Class II who made the memorial possible. He said in part, "Let's never forget our partners, those heroic canines both past and present, for their gallant service to our country, both at home and places so very far away. You have made us very proud to have been on the end of your leash, now and forever."

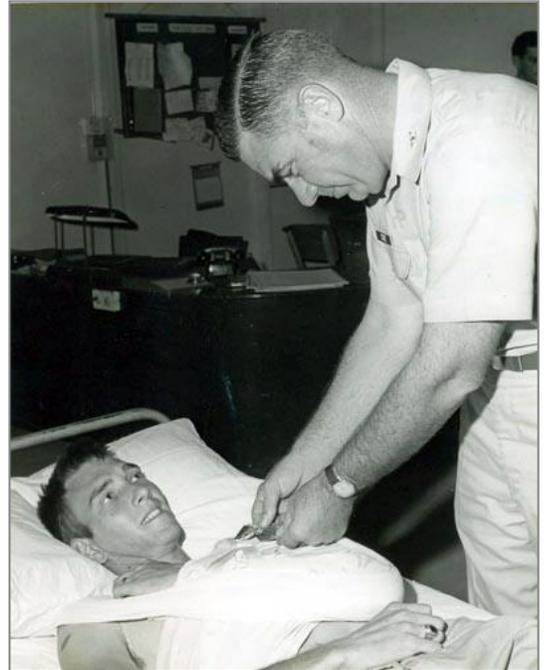
Nemo's Legacy at 50 continued on page 6

www.mwdtsa.org

Nemo's Legacy at 50 continued from Page 5



Left: Nemo in his retirement, the scars from his wounds and missing eye can be seen. (www.vspa.com, Courtesy of Nemo's War Dog Heroes Memorial)



A2C Throneburg, Robert A. (above/bed), wounded in action on 4 Dec 1966, is being presented the Purple Heart at U. S. Army 3rd Field Hospital by Col Grover K. Coe (left/standing), Tan Son Nhut's Base Commander. (Dec 1966). Throneburg was also awarded the Bronze Star w/Valor.

Right: Photo shows the terrible wound suffered by Nemo. Courtesy of Nemo's War Dog Heroes Memorial (www.vspa.com)



Photo, A2C Robert A. Throneburg, courtesy of: Fred Johnson, Bill Johnson and Jeff Johnson, sons of Lt Col Grove C. Johnson, Commander 377th Air/Security Police Squadron, 1966 - 1967 (http://www.vspa.com/tsn-377th-aps-dec-4-first-alert-c-penley-1966.htm)



NEMO A534 in a portrait showing him after his combat tour, with his right eye missing.



Nemo's Memorial Kennel with K-9 Honor Guard During Dedication Ceremony, 2005 (www.vspa.com)

The Ice Dawgs Cometh

Story and photos by Dixie Whitman

November 5, 2016 is a day I shall never forget. For many people, it was just an ordinary day, but for me, it was so much more. On this day, I witnessed the fulfillment of a vision and a promise that I made long ago. When Ken Besecker and I created MWD TSA at a dining room table ten years ago, it was a huge leap of faith. But over the years, we have proven that the old adage is true: if there's a will, there's a way. We currently have a network of over 60 dedicated volunteers, and I was honored to spend November 5 with some of them as we packed MWD TSA's 41st set of care packages.

As part of our 10th anniversary weekend, about 20 volunteers came to my Georgia home from Michigan, Indiana, West Virginia, Tennessee, Florida, and other areas around Georgia. I was honored to work alongside everyone as we filled the "Ice Dogs Lead the Way" boxes with all kinds of goodies. The teamwork and dedication of this group ensured that the Ice Dawgs care packages were the best they could be.

So what surprises were included? For the dog handlers, we sent gear and lots of snacks. We packed the military working dogs toys and treats - basically their payday! We included lots of hockey-themed items as well. For this special anniversary event, MWD TSA also partnered with the University of Georgia Hockey Foundation. This organization supports the SEC Champion UGA hockey team, who are lovingly nicknamed the "Ice Dawgs." Two generous supporters of UGA hockey, David Brooks and Dan McAlister, donated nearly 200 individually embroidered "Ice Dawgs" hats to MWD TSA for our packages. In fact, we loved the hats so much that we mirrored this theme in our quarterly t-shirts. We also received a generous gift of "Hockey Players Support U.S. Troops" patches, USA Hockey magazine, and hockey pucks, both real and chocolate.

Many other organizations made in-kind contributions, from steadfast donors like D.O.G. Bakery and San Francisco Bay Gourmet Coffee to first-time donors Treadwell Pet Products, Millican Pecan Company, and Touchpoint Media. A list of all of the donors was included in our quarterly letter sent to the dog handlers inside their care packages.

All totaled, we constructed 175 large flat rate priority postal boxes, which volunteers then filled with everything from A to Z, including Atkinson Candy Company Peanut Coconut Brittle Bars, and Zuke's Z-Bones dog treats. Right on cue, the postal truck pulled up and volunteers quickly loaded the care packages to be shipped to the hands and paws of our deployed dog teams.

After a hard day's work, the festivities began with a sumptuous BBQ of chopped pork and culminated with a beautiful (and delicious) 10th anniversary cake. MWD TSA volunteers made presentations of gratitude to Christian Print Shop, our printing partners for the entire ten year stretch, and to co-founders Ken Besecker and me. From the bottom of my heart, thank you to everyone who made this event possible. I am so very blessed to work with such passionate, devoted people who share my commitment to serving those who serve. We hope to receive some package photos coming in soon from our boxes, but in the meantime, please enjoy these photos of our packing event.



A photo of most of the volunteers working to pull the packages together.

The Ice Dawgs continued on page 8

The Ice Dawgs Cometh continued from page 7



Above: Mailman Josh poses with the mail truck sent to pick up our boxes.



Above: Volunteer Jerry Whitman poses with his favorite hot sauce while manning the BBQ cooker.



Above: Volunteers help the postal employees fill the truck with nearly 175 care packages.



Above: Former dog handlers, Jonathan and Jodi Jackson, speak with Isaac McGuire.



Above: Owners of Christian Print Shop, Isaac and Irene McGuire, our T-shirt printing partners, were presented an award for their dedication above and beyond the printing of the shirts. This is the third year they have helped with the packing, too.



Above: Volunteer Lisa Eiser poses with some of the boxes she constructed. She called this "having her ears boxed."



Left: One slice in, but we got a photo of the decorated cake in celebration of 10 years of care packages going out. (Photo courtesy of Irene McGuire.)

Taking Care of Team Charleston's Furry Friends

**JOINT BASE CHARLESTON, SC,
UNITED STATES
10.21.2016 Photo by Airman
Megan Munoz
Joint Base Charleston Public
Affairs Office**

The JB Charleston Veterinary Treatment Facility provides medical care to military working dogs and the cats and dogs of military members and retirees. Additionally, the clinic has the responsibility of ensuring all food sold and served on the Air Base and Weapons Station is safe for human consumption.

The vet clinic's primary focus is to take care of the 628th Security Forces military working dogs. They need to be healthy to train consistently while protecting the base.

"Our mission with the military working dogs has the highest priority," said U.S. Army Capt. Chelsi Deaner, Joint Base Charleston Veterinary Treatment Facility veterinary core officer. "They have a very important job and, if the dogs aren't healthy, they can't do their mission."

Every quarter the vet clinic conducts first aid training with the military working dog handlers. The training prepares the handlers for common health issues or emergencies that may occur while deployed.

"It is very important for the handlers to have practical experience and acquire good emergency care skills for their dogs," said U.S. Army Sgt. Valeria Montes, a Joint Base Charleston Veterinary Treatment Facility veterinary technician. "It is even more imperative when they are deployed. Our training goal is to have the handlers proficient in preventing as many injuries as we can. We want handlers to be able to do everything they can medically for the well-being of their military working dog."

In addition to taking care of their "animal kingdom patients," the clinic staff works with the Public Health Clinic and the Navy Preventative Medicine Clinic to inspect facilities around the installation that sell or serve food.

Right: U.S. Army Capt. Chelsi Deaner, Joint Base Charleston Veterinary Treatment Facility veterinary core officer, listens to Nestle's heartbeat during a check-up at the JB Charleston Veterinary Treatment Facility, Oct. 21, 2016. Nestle is a Joint Base Charleston personally owned pet and the Vet Clinic provides medical care to personally owned pets of military members and retirees. (U.S. Air Force Photo/Airman Megan Munoz)



Left: U.S. Army Capt. Chelsi Deaner, Joint Base Charleston Veterinary Treatment Facility veterinary core officer, examines Military Working Dog Ari's teeth while Senior Airman Trey Weston, a 628th Security Forces Squadron military working dog handler, holds Ari's mouth open at the Veterinary Treatment Facility here, Oct. 18, 2016. The JB Charleston Veterinary Treatment Facility provides care to military working dogs and has quarterly training with the military working dog handlers on emergency procedures and first aid for their dogs when they deploy. (U.S. Air Force Photo/Airman Megan Munoz)

"We oversee the food safety mission for Joint Base Charleston," said Deaner. "The Public Health Clinic handles the Air Base while we work with the Navy Preventative Medicine Clinic to make sure all food facilities are meeting standards. We inspect the 23 different facilities on the Weapons Station. Our main food safety mission is the Commissary. We have several food inspectors who are there daily to ensure everything is done appropriately. This includes making sure the storage standards are met and the sources they're buying from are approved, so the food being sold is safe to eat."

The vet clinic's third mission is to provide medical care to the personally owned pets of JB Charleston. They are open to take care of cats and dogs and usually are able to see up to 10 pets a day, depending on the workload of their other missions. U.S. Army veterinarians are also able to sign health certificates as United States Department of Agriculture veterinarians for pets going overseas with their owners.

"Any active-duty service member or retiree can bring their pets in and we'll see them," said Deaner. "When pets get sick their owners are usually very worried about them. In most cases, pets are family members."

Thanks to our great donors

MWDTSA 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:

A Tail Away Inc, Canton, Georgia
 Atkinson Candy Company, Lutkin, Texas
 Bethany United Methodist Church, Smyrna, Georgia
 Stanton Bost
 Matthew J. Carlisle
 Patricia Carter
 Chuck and Don's Pet Food and Supplies, Aurora, Colorado
 Devonie and Optimus (GSD)
 D.O.G. Bakery, Traverse City, Michigan
 FIGO Pet Insurance, Downers Grove, Illinois
 William and Stacy Forst
 Krista Hernandez
 Stacey Hurd
 Pat Jenkins
 Pamela Kendrick
 Kurgo Products, Motivation Design, LLC, Salisbury, Massachusetts

Natasha Millard's 2nd Grade Class, Butler Elementary, Butler, Missouri
 Georgette Maus
 Jeffrey McGrath
 Arianna Morse
 Kerri Moss
 Francis Murch
 Nabisco and his human, Melody
 Victoria Neal
 Linda Ockuly
 Laurie Newton
 Frank Pilato
 Stephen Redden
 Nikki Rohrig
 Kristen SanAntonio
 Georgia Sanchez
 Robert Schnell
 Jan Slotar
 Richard Snyder
 Christa Ursini
 VFW Post 8959, Kerhonkson, New York
 Deb Vandenbaugh
 Jonathan Wilcox
 Kathie Woodring
 Shantel M. Wooten
 Zukes, Durango, Colorado

Remembering John Douangdara

Story by Bill Doiron

My K9 unit was in Washington D.C. recently and we decided to pay tribute to John Douangdara, a Navy dog handler buried at Arlington National Cemetery. The Kennel Talk articles by Dixie Whitman and John's sister, Chan Follen, struck a chord in all of us so we decided to go to his gravesite to honor this man we lost at too young an age. Ron Strahle brought a dog statue we left with John and we want Chan to know we will always remember John in our thoughts and prayers.

The 483rd SPS K9 unit of Cam Rahn Bay, Vietnam. Group picture Back Row L-R Dale Blackstone, George Reavis, Lyle Kiszonas, Gerry Guinn, Dennis McNulty. Middle: Ed Idelsen, Bill Klinger, Bill Doiron and Al Poole. Kneeling is Bob Lennox and Ron Strahle, along with Bob's grandson Kadian.



Support Our KONGs for K9s Drive

| Store | Location | Toy | Month(s) |
|--|--|---|-------------------|
| Brown Veterinary Service 304.272.6200 | Wayne, West Virginia 300 McGinnis Drive | KONG Extreme Flyer | August—December |
| Big Creek Animal Hospital 470-839-9700 | Cumming, Georgia 5995 Post Road | KONG Extreme Flyer | November-December |
| Little River Animal Hospital 770-619-1616 | Milton, Georgia 15710 Birmingham Way | KONG Extreme Flyer | November-December |
| Peachtree Corners Animal Cl. 770-448-0700 | Norcross, Georgia 4020 Holcomb Bridge Rd | KONG Extreme Ball KONG Extreme Flyer | November-December |
| The Animal Keeper 760.753.9366 | Encinitas, California 155 Saxony Road | KONG Extreme Ball KONG Extreme Flyer | November-December |
| The Animal Keeper 760-941.3221 | Oceanside, California 3532 College Blvd. | KONG Extreme Ball KONG Extreme Flyer | November-December |
| The Animal Keeper 858-748-9676 | Poway, California 12280 Oak Knoll Rd. | KONG Extreme Ball KONG Extreme Flyer | November-December |
| Pet Suites 949-425-0700 | Aliso Viejo, California 19 Journey | KONG Extreme Ball KONG Extreme Flyer | November-December |
| PetSupermarket 561-253-6000 | West Palm Beach, Florida 846 Southern Blvd. | KONG Extreme Ball Kong Extreme Flyer | November-December |

A Peek at January's Kennel Talk



Here are just a few of the goodies packed in our Ice Dawgs care packages (see story on page 7).

Be sure to check out our January, 2017 issue to see photos of our handlers and their dogs enjoying their special treats!

MWDTSA Visits Buckley AFB

Story and photos by Leigh Steere

In a second Colorado base visit made possible by a PetSmart Charities grant, MWDTSA volunteers Shelli Patti and Leigh Steere traveled to Buckley AFB's kennel on Monday, October 17. Kennel Master TSgt Martin Campos and his team provided a tour of the facility, as well as several demonstrations—including how to pick up and carry a heavy MWD.

Built in 2013, the new kennel at Buckley has a synthetic turf training yard and state-of-the-art concrete agility features. The yard sits in full sun, which can be good training for desert conditions. But high altitude sun is more intense than at lower elevations, such that a 75-degree thermometer reading in Colorado can feel more like 90+. In mid-October, sweat trickled down my collar as we watched MWD Rex move through the agility course.

TSgt Campos is serving for a second time at Buckley. After a stint in Colorado from 2005 to 2007, he was deployed to Osan Air Base in South Korea and later to Misa-wa Air Base in Japan. After returning to the U.S., he spent a year as a dog trainer and three years as an instructor at Lackland AFB, before arriving at Buckley again on December 15, 2015.

His background as a Master Instructor became evident during the demonstrations. In the past eight months, Buckley has welcomed four brand new handlers. As the handlers took the MWDs through their paces, TSgt Campos called out corrections with equal measures of formality, humor, and encouragement, watching for the smallest details to help these K9 teams become maximally effective.

The sense of camaraderie at this base is inspiring, and we look forward to supporting these teams in upcoming deployments.



The synthetic turf sits in stark contrast to the native vegetation. Growing green grass in semi-arid Eastern Colorado requires extensive irrigation. And even on a manicured lawn, native grasses that are dangerous to dogs, such as foxtail, can spring up as weeds. The artificial turf provides a safer environment for paws and is more practical to maintain.



Though the base dates back to 1943, the first kennel opened at Buckley less than 20 years ago. MWD Ziko was Buckley's first K9. As Kennel Master TSgt Campos explained MWD Ziko's history, the deep reverence Buckley handlers feel for their dogs was palpable.

MWD TSA Visits Buckley AFB continued from page 12



MWD TSA brought a picnic lunch and gifts for the Buckley handlers and dogs. From left to right: SSgt Cooper, SrA Gutierrez, SrA Velasquez, SrA Brinkman, SrA Hoffman, and TSgt Campos. Photo by Shelli Lee



SrA Velasquez & MWD Rex demonstrate the agility course.

MWD TSA's Amazon Wish List

MWD TSA has an Amazon Wish List, and if you are buying items from the Wish List to donate for the Q1 2017 Care Packages, please include your name and mailing address on the gift receipt when you check out. That way we can send you a proper thank you note for the items you have donated. We would also like to thank those of you who have already donated items from our Amazon Wish List. However, we are unable to send you a proper thank you, if we do not have your address.



Doggles Originalz Large Frame Goggles for Dogs with Smoke Lens, Black



Earthbath All Natural Hypo-Allergenic Grooming Wipes



FURminator Long Hair deShedding Tool for Dogs, Large

Here are just a few of the items on the MWD TSA Amazon Wish List for our Q1 2017 Care Packages.

MWD TSA Visits Ft. Benning

Story and photos by Lisa Eiser

"Eiser? Fill out your full social security number and sign at the bottom and here is your pass." Back to the waiting area to meet up with my fellow Military Working Dog Team Support Association members. This is my first time to participate in a group event with other MWD TSA volunteers. I was excited and anxious to meet the other volunteers who were gathering at Ft. Benning for a visit to the War Dog Memorial and then the Kennels. As I waited, I began making new friends as the MWD TSA volunteers began to accumulate at the Visitor Checkpoint. And before long, Gloria Greenidge, the Kennel Master and a long standing recipient of many deployment boxes, was there to greet us and give "Miss Dixie" a huge hug. And soon we were off to the Memorial in a large caravan.

A little background about me. I am a Navy and Army daughter (My dad was in both, my mom was Army WWII), a Navy wife and current Navy Mom. Anything patriotic or military makes me tear up. Always has, always will. So traveling to the memorial, I knew that I would tear up. And I did. It's a beautiful tribute to the four-legged and two-legged that have served our country. The strength in the statue gave me chills. I asked Gloria why she chose to work with MWD's as her military career path. When she began her story, her face just lit up as she told us how a chance encounter with an Air Force MWD handler while she was an airport MP in Germany started her on the trek. We all stood around listening as she bubbled

over with pride about her journey and her deployments and how she got to where she is now. She was captivating to listen to and held our attention while she spoke. Her admiration for Dixie was apparent right away and with good reason. Their friendship began when Dixie came to visit on Gloria's first day of work over 10 years ago. Dixie and MWD TSA have sent Gloria packages through 3 deployments. We meandered about the memorial, snapping photos and talking about how important the memorial is to MWD Teams. We took a group photo and moved on to the kennels.

We reached the kennels and Gloria gave us the history on the buildings and kennels at the Fort. A tornado in 2010 leveled the location of the former kennels. Emergency housing was needed for the dogs and people came through in spades. Construction began on the new buildings and grants were secured to make sure these kennels were high-tech inside and out for the MWDs. After a tour and explanations about diets, doctoring, protection, safety and some introductions to some pretty neat MWD's, we were taken to the observation and demonstration. We were introduced to the 5 handlers and one pup who were going to show us their "stuff". The handler and dog had only been together for 2 weeks and they were marvelous for just getting in their groove. Dixie and Dick got the Go Pro camera and Jegs wore it during her demo. Jegs is an explosives dog and showed us how she could locate explosives on the ground and in a vehicle. Jegs is also an off-leash trained dog, so she is able to be let loose

to track her item while listening to her handler's instructions while about 300 feet away from her handler. The final demo used 3 handlers, 1 MWD, and 2 vehicles. Spc. Cummings was the suspect, complete with a torso bite jacket. He eventually fled his vehicle while Cpl. Syvertson and Pfc. Trulock released the hound. Take down successful!

In a shaded area, the Ft. Benning Handlers had prepared a wonderful lunch for all of us to enjoy. Stories were shared, discussions on the difference of the handlers during Vietnam and now, and several of us shared how we came to be interested in volunteering for MWD TSA. But there was more to be shared.

Nikki, Allison, Dick and Jerry brought out several boxes of goodies for the Ft. Benning dogs and handlers. Chuck, Kongs, bandanas, as well as shirts, coffee and Kuerigs were delivered to very grateful handlers. Challenge coins were given by Nikki to the handlers, and a very special collage was given to Dixie. Gloria went to her office and retrieved another special gift for Dixie. A special hand-made illustration made by Gloria for Dixie. It was stunning and Dixie was almost speechless.

We thanked our hosts for the tour, demonstration and wonderful lunch. Hugs and handshakes followed as we all began to leave, content that our lives were all more enriched by our involvement in MWD TSA and our visit to Ft. Benning.



SSG Gloria Greenidge Kennel Master, SGT Brandon Spears, CPL Austin Syvertson, MWD Macey, SGT David Collet, SPC John Cummings, PFC Cassandra Trulock.

Ft. Benning continued from page 14



The author and MWD Odeta.



Ft. Benning War Dog Memorial.



Cpl. Austin Syvertson and MWD Jegs.



K9 Handlers KIA WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Kuwait, Iraq.



Lt. Col. Ken Besecker (Ret.), SSG Gloria Greenidge, the Ft. Benning Kennel Master, and Dick Baumer (Ret.). Both Lt. Col. Besecker (Ret.) and Col. Baumer (Ret.) received training at the Scout Dog School at Ft. Benning during the Vietnam War.



Bronze Statue.



SSG Gloria Greenidge receiving a Challenge Coin from MWD TSA President Nikki Rohig.

Sit. Stay. Support.

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

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

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

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GSDCA Special Newsletter Awards!



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Parting Shots

Tyndall Air Force Base



Tyndall Air Force Base, Panama City, FL - Nov. 14, 2016

U.S. Air Force Maj. Mari Metzler, 325th Aerospace Medical Squadron aerospace physiology flight commander and retired Military Working Dog, Mica T204 spend time together before Mica's final patrol Nov. 14, 2016 at Tyndall Air Force Base. Metzler adopted Mica after she was released from the MWD section earlier this year. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Javier Cruz/Released)