

May 2016
Award Winning
Monthly Newsletter

Volume 8, Issue 5

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winning MWD publication!

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MWDTSA touches the
lives of dogs and people
near and far. This
month, our articles and
photos take us from
West Virginia to North
Carolina, Georgia, Mis-
souri, Colorado, Alaska,
Japan, and on to Qatar.
Our archive photo takes
us back in time to the
1960's.

Subscribe to see where
we connect next month!

Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

MWDTSA KENNEL TALK



Gene Hinely, shown above, with his ever-present partner, Traveler-2. Gene was a dog handler with the 62nd Combat Trackers during the Vietnam War. He and his black lab, Traveler, were assigned to a five man, single-dog team called Combat Trackers. Their job was considered classified and few outside of the small, elite group even knew of its existence.

Gene Hinely: A Veteran, A War... And Two Dogs

Story reprinted courtesy of Effingham Magazine

Written by Jeff Whitten

Photos by Miranda Osborn and Luke Smith

This is a story of a man, a war, and two dogs. It's a story of perseverance and bonds that come from scars that don't heal.

The man is Charles "Gene" Hinely, who was born and raised on Hinely Hill in Effingham County (Georgia) and at 66 still lives within a rock's throw of where his grandfather was born.

The war was Vietnam.

The dogs, both black labs, are called Traveler, after Robert E. Lee's horse. One Traveler is long gone, but kept Gene and fellow soldiers

alive in Vietnam. The other is very much here. He's Traveler 2.

Traveler 2, all 125 pounds of him, saves Gene Hinely's life now. Saves it every day.

"You just don't know where I'd be without this dog," Hinely said. "You just don't know. I wouldn't take a million dollars for this dog." The story began in 1969. That's the year Gene Hinely was drafted into the Army. Gene was 19 and married to Veronica and already had a job at Great Dane Trailers in Savannah, a job

Gene Hinely continued on page 2

Gene Hinely continued from page 1

he would return to after the war. Gene worked for many years at Great Dane before retiring.

In 1969, Gene went off to Fort Gordon for basic and advanced individual training and was then given the opportunity to become part of a combat tracker team. He took the Army up on the offer, was sent to MP school and then underwent combat tracker training. He then was trained to work as a dog handler as part of five man combat tracker teams, a specialty which guaranteed Charles would end up in Vietnam.

"Everybody was going to Vietnam anyway, so it wasn't a big deal," he recalled. "They told us when we finished this course, we were going to Vietnam and we were going to walk point. That's what they told us, and that's what happened."

If you've never heard of combat trackers, you're not alone. Using dogs -- black labs because of their temperament -- to sniff out enemy soldiers adept at striking and then melting away into the jungle was something untried by the United States prior to Vietnam.

The first trackers were actually trained in Malaysia, at the behest of Gen. William

Westmoreland, the top commander in Vietnam, who'd gotten the idea from the British. Those first trackers returned to the U.S. and taught others when the Army opened its own tracker school at Fort Gordon.

Everything was kept secret and it would always remain a small, elite band. Only about 750 combat trackers were deployed to Vietnam, a mere drop in the bucket compared to the more than 648,000 American military personnel who served there during the war.

Gene Hinely and Traveler were assigned to the 62nd Infantry Platoon Combat Tracker team as part of the 1st Air Cavalry Division. They spent parts of 1970-1971 in Vietnam, with stops in Bien Hoa, Long Phen, Cambodia and Laos. It was deadly work.

"When we went into the bush, it was just the five of us, that was it. We made contact, it was the five of us, until we could call a company in."

The tracker teams would be called in by companies to help find enemy soldiers, but they were also used to help find missing American servicemen and were adept at finding booby-traps.

"What usually happened, a company would make contact with the enemy and would call us in," Gene said. "We had our own helicopters. Sometimes they could set down and let us out, sometimes we'd have to rappel in."

The five-man teams included a visual tracker and his cover man, a dog handler and his cover man, and a radio man. Sometimes the teams would lead a company, sometimes they'd be on their own.

If the escaping Vietcong or North Vietnamese left broken limbs or footprints or other marks of their passing, the visual tracker would take the lead while his cover man kept an eye out for ambushes and booby traps.

Once the visual trail disappeared, Hinely and Traveler took over. It could be harrowing work, because handlers had to watch the dogs, each of whom had a unique way of alerting when it picked up the scent of an enemy. Booby traps and ambushes were a real threat in the dense

jungles of Vietnam.

"While I was watching the dog to get his alert, I couldn't watch the bush, so my cover man would watch the bush," Gene recalled, and noted that Traveler alerted in different ways depending on what he found. "If there was a booby trap he'd throw me an alert where his ears would stick straight up. If the enemy was close, he'd throw me another alert by turning around and looking at me a certain way."

The trackers, whose patch shows a Native American looking at the ground, became so good at their job and so feared by the NVA, that bounties of \$2000 were placed on the heads of each combat tracker and dog. "When we found out all that, we didn't wear any patches at all," Gene said. "We didn't advertise it."

Before their service was over, Gene and Traveler went into the jungles 75 times. Two of Gene's friends were killed, and there are things he saw and did he doesn't like to talk about. "You did what you had to do," Gene said. "We all did. We saw some pretty rough stuff in our time."

And then he came home, minus Traveler, who ultimately got back to the United States and was adopted by an Army officer. Gene was awarded a Bronze Star for valor, an Air Medal, an Army Commendation Medal with one bronze oak leaf cluster, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service medal with two bronze service stars, a Combat Infantryman Badge, the Expert Rifleman Badge with the automatic rifle bar, and the Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation with a palm. Gene stashed those, and just about everything else from Vietnam and went on with his life. The Army told him not to say anything about the Combat Tracker Teams, so he didn't.

Gene and Veronica stayed married and are married still. They raised a family -- the Hinelys have two daughters, Jennifer Reese and Stephanie Wallace, and three grandchildren -- Rebekah Wallace, Meghan Wallace and Daniel Reese.

In short, Gene returned home from war to live a good, productive and honorable life.



A photo of Traveler by Photographer: Luke Smith

Photos of Gene's military dog, Traveler, are displayed around the house.

Gene Hinely continued from page 2

"I was one of the lucky ones, I never got to drinking bad, never messed with drugs over there at all, and a lot of people can't say that," he said.

But bonds formed in war die hard. Since 2000 he and other combat trackers have met for reunions, and word's been getting out about the trackers. For Veronica, those first reunions were learning experiences. "Until I went with him (Gene) to that first one I had no idea of what he'd done in Vietnam."

The war kept coming back in other ways, too. Gene had been exposed to more than the threat of booby traps and vengeful Viet Cong. In Vietnam the U.S. military sprayed a herbicide known as Agent Orange from aircraft "to protect American and allied troops by defoliating the dense jungle vegetation hiding enemy positions," according to the Veterans Administration. The VA estimates that between 1962 and 1971, nearly 11 million gallons were sprayed in Vietnam alone.

It's unknown precisely how many soldiers were exposed to Agent Orange, but Gene was. Agent Orange has caused a number of health problems, and Gene got diabetes. He's also had two heart attacks and a stroke. In 2007, he was put on the Agent Orange registry. His family members are also on the registry because there's a chance some of the sicknesses caused by the herbicide can be passed down.

Something else was wrong, too. Gene began having nightmares. Starting about 2004, he became claustrophobic. He'd get angry for no good reason. He was jumpy. Things that happened in Vietnam long buried began to come back to the surface.

Gene began seeing a psychiatrist through the VA. He was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

"All of us from Vietnam didn't want to admit that. It's a man thing, we didn't need help. But when it finally started coming out, my family kept telling me I need to find out what's wrong," Gene said. "I found out it was PTSD. They give me medicine for it."

These days, the VA considers Gene 100



A photo of Gene and Traveler 2 by photographer Miranda Osborn taken in the location where Gene's family has lived for generations.

percent disabled. He gets a check for that. "People say I'm lucky to get that check," he said, shaking his head. "Yeah, I'm lucky. I'm 66 and I'll be lucky to be 69 or 70 maybe. I'd a lot rather not have it."

But it wasn't until about two and a half years ago that Gene got Traveler 2. The idea came from Veronica, who knew that medication, group therapy and visits to the psychiatrist weren't helping. Her husband's nightmares and panic attacks were getting worse, not better. But first she had to convince Gene's psychiatrist, who wasn't sure a dog would help.

Veronica was sure.

"I've been with him 48 years," Veronica said. "I just knew in my heart the answer to everything was the dog."

She called her youngest daughter, Jennifer, and told her they needed to find a black lab. "It's got to be full blooded, it

has to be solid black with no markings."

Jennifer got on Facebook and spread the word. "Within 30 minutes she got a phone call from a guy named Randy Brewster, who knew somebody who bred them and had a litter of 4-week-old puppies."

Gene was invited out to look at the puppies and was given -- literally -- pick of the litter.

"Gene asked how much were the dogs, and he was told 'Sir, for what you did for our country there's no charge for that dog,'" Veronica said.

Those folks are Eric and Sha Brazzell. They've done a great turn.

Since getting Traveler in 2012, Gene hasn't been back to a group therapy session. "Every Wednesday for two and a half years I went to that support group," he said. "The day I got him, I never went back. That's how much that dog has helped me."

Traveler 2, who has never been trained as a therapy dog, has helped ease anxiety attacks. "Sometimes I'll wake up and he's got one of his front legs around me and he's looking me in the face, right in the face, and then he'll lick me and that helps distract me and keep me from having the anxiety attack."

Traveler 2 even lets Gene know when his blood sugar gets too high. Traveler 2 may be big and he may be rambunctious, but he's worth everything you can imagine to Gene, and Veronica, who thought their dog-raising days were behind them.

"You just don't get a puppy at 62," Veronica said. "And now my house is never clean and there's always dog hair and it might smell like a dog. But for what it does for him, I'll take it. If you can't, don't come in."

The first Traveler is honored in photographs displayed around the house. Traveler 2 just owns the house, and the two human hearts that live inside it.

"That dog has helped me more than any medicine or doctor or support group I ever went to," Gene said. "He's something else."

Marines, Japanese Sniff Out Explosives

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Aaron Henson

Marines from the Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni Provost Marshal's Office K-9 unit trained with Hiroshima Prefectural Police Headquarters policemen and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF)-Kure Repair and Supply Facility Petroleum Terminal military working dog handlers at MCAS Iwakuni, Japan, March 22, 2016.

Trained in a variety of areas such as locating explosives and narcotics, conducting patrols, and human tracking, handlers and their military working dogs train regularly in order to maintain operational readiness, become a more effective team, and ensure the safety of the station residents.

"The objective of this joint training is to strengthen a friendly and cooperative relationship between MCAS Iwakuni and JMSDF Kure personnel and to improve the ability to achieve respective goals," said Japan Ground Self-Defense Force Capt. Yasushi Fujita, JMSDF Kure area security command post chief.

U.S. and Japanese handlers escorted their K-9s to locate explosives hidden throughout the station's landfill and harbor areas. Sgt. Adrian Nanez, PMO kennel master, placed explosives in hidden locations while the pair waited out of site, resulting in a more cautious and thorough search, increasing the overall training effectiveness.

"We started conducting joint training with the Japanese handlers a couple of years ago and have tried every three months since then to search for explosives and prepare our dogs for any type of emergency," said Lance Cpl. Colton Corsetti, PMO military working dog handler. "We have a couple of different scenarios that we set up with the police handlers involving buildings with big rooms that resemble a stadium or a large gathering, so our dogs become used to searching for long periods of time and are able to search for multiple ingredients in different explosives."

Conducting bilateral training like this builds stronger relationships between the U.S. and Japan while also maintaining situational readiness and ensuring the safety of personnel.

"JMSDF engages in various exercises with

U.S. armed forces including JMSDF deployments for guard and force protection of U.S. bases in Japan and conducting JMSDF security missions," said Fujita. "These represent our outstanding and positive relationship and therefore I believe this training is very important."

Corsetti said with the Marines military background and the Japanese knowledge of the culture and area, they can work together to get better at responding to any situation that may occur.

"We learn a lot from the Japanese," said Corsetti. "Every time we conduct training together, I walk away knowing more than I did going in. The obedience their dogs have is superb and their search patterns are great."

Right: The Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni Provost Marshal's Office K-9 unit trained with Hiroshima Prefectural Police Headquarters policemen and the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force Kure Repair and Supply Facility Petroleum Terminal unit Military Working Dog handlers at MCAS Iwakuni, Japan, March 22, 2016.



Left: Police Lt. Muneyuki Hirao, a police dog trainer at Hiroshima Prefectural Police Headquarters, and his K-9 search for explosives during joint training with Marines from the Provost Marshal's Office at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, March 22, 2016.

MWD TSA Photos of Iwakuni Event

Additional Iwakuni information and photos from Hailey Lowe

MWD TSA's own volunteer, Hailey Lowe, joined in for the photo session on Tuesday, March 22, as the MCAS Iwakuni K9 Unit hosted the Joint Training Operation with the Hiroshima PD K9 Unit. She was invited by the Kennel Master to attend and take pictures.

Hailey was lucky enough to get some good shots of the Iwakuni Marines and their wonderful partners. All photos on this page are by Hailey.

Top photo: MWD Sophia and LCpl Gilliam pose for Japanese paparazzi. Photographers from local news outlets were invited out for a chance to record the training event.

Second photo: MWD Ssophia and LCpl Gilliam provide a demonstration for the Hiroshima Police Dept. K9 Unit.

Third photo: LCpl Gilliam enjoys some time bonding with his partner. These sessions make their partnership stronger.

Fourth photo: With the news media in the background, MWD Ssophia seeks an odor source during a demonstration.

Bottom photo left: MWD Xxcaliber and LCpl Hagan show their detection skills.

Bottom photo right: While waiting with his handler, LCpl Hagan, something catches Xxcaliber's attention.

Both Ssophia and Xxcaliber are Belgian malinois, a herding breed which excels at military working dog duties. Because of the double "S" and "X" at the beginning of their names, we know that both dogs were born and bred into the Puppy Program at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas.



Soldier and Airmen Dog Handlers Participate in Training

By Airman 1st Class Javier Alvarez
All photos by Alejandro Pena
Via Arctic Warrior

JBER Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska – Soldiers of the 549th Military Working Dog Detachment and Airmen of the 673d Security Forces Squadron participated in joint explosives-detection training on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson March 17, 2016.

While the training may be performed regularly by the Army and the Air Force, the joint aspect is what made this event significant.

"In the past we've tried to do [joint training] monthly or a couple times quarterly, but due to manning and [other restrictions] here, it hasn't taken place," said Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Turner, 549th MWD kennel master.

"We're trying to build that relationship back up and get everyone on track as far as ... being able to work together," he said. "We are hoping to have joint training as something that will happen on a much more regular basis."

Since JBER is a joint installation, there is a greater need for the coordination of military police and security forces.

It's paramount for dog handlers from both branches to know what each side is going to bring in the event of an emergency, said Sam Finney, 673d SFS kennel master.

The training was set up very much like a search that would be performed in a remote village, to mimic what dog handlers may experience in a deployed environment, said Spc. Jared Schultz, a 549th MWD dog handler.

"Very few times are we actually going to search an RV lot or a warehouse in a deployed environment," he said. "Not that it couldn't happen, but it's not as likely. This is why we train all these different areas."

Further importance of joint training lies in the ability to share training practices where service members can see training methods in practice that appeal to different learning styles.

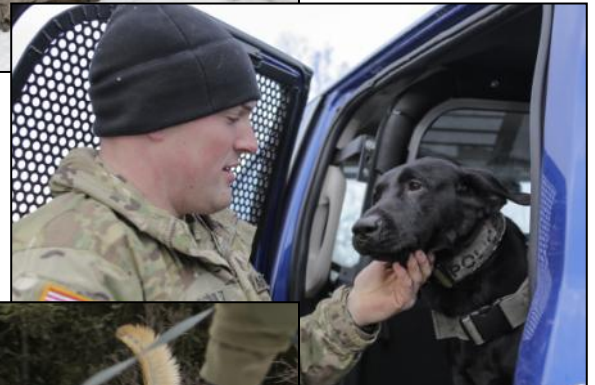
"Just like a person, [all dogs learn differently]," Schultz said. "Someone might be a visual learner where another may need to hear something. [This is the same for a dog] and it's all about how you can get through to the dog. When you get to see other people [train] you get to see some of their ideas or concepts played out. Even if they don't work for you and your dog, you can learn from them and ... you have a tool that you can add to your toolbox. In the end, it's up to you what tools you put into that box."



Above: MWD Faro



Left: MWD Teddy



Above: U.S. Army Spc. Jared Schultz interacts with Teddy.



Left: MWD Ciko

Joint Training continued from page 6

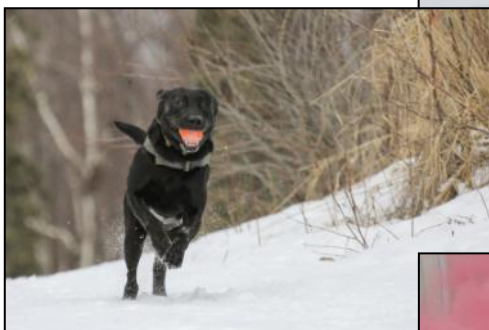
Top left: U.S. Army military working dog, Faro, assigned to the 549th Military Working Dog Detachment, searches for simulated hidden explosives while conducting K-9 training at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, March 17, 2016. Military working dogs are trained to respond to various law enforcement emergencies as well as detect hidden narcotics and explosives.



Second: MWD Faro enjoys his red reward toy.



Center left: U.S. Army military working dog, Teddy, assigned to the 549th Military Working Dog Detachment, frolics after successfully detecting simulated hidden explosives while conducting K-9 training.



Fourth: U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Joe Burns and military working dog, Ciko, assigned to the 673rd Security Forces Squadron, conduct K-9 training. The Security Forces Airmen conducted the K-9 training with their Army counterparts, assigned to the 549th Military Working Dog Detachment, to keep their teams flexible to respond to law enforcement emergencies, and for overseas deployments. The purpose of the K-9 training was to adapt the dogs to possible real-world conditions they might encounter as well as practice detecting possible hidden explosives under conditions where they cannot see.



Bottom left: U.S. Army Spc. Jared Schultz, assigned to the 549th Military Working Dog Detachment, signals to his military working dog, Teddy, while searching for simulated hidden explosives.



Bottom right: U.S. Army Pfc. Ian Smith encourages military working dog, Faro, after successfully detecting simulated hidden explosives.



Thanks to our great donors

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

Gifts in memory of JeriLee Nickerson

Mary Payne Chase
Mark and Helen Johnston
Carmen Lorbeer
Don Nickerson
Helene Quillin
Rosemary Swanson
Laura Twaddle
The Gindoffs
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Lincoln, California
Sun Dog Kennel, Traverse City, Michigan
Amanda Tomlinson
Devonie Townsend
Christa Ursini
West Virginia Division of Natural Resources
South Charleston, West Virginia
Kathie Woodring
Zuke's Durango, Colorado

Timing Is Everything



MWD TSA was contacted by a supporter who had handcrafted a flag-inspired dog sweater and afghan throw. She asked for our help in finding a home for the set with a dog handler and retired dog.

Anyone who crafts handmade crochet or knitted items puts untold hours of time into their vision; effort and love goes into each stitch. Thinking of all of the wonderful candidates to receive such a heartfelt gift, we proposed Gloria Greenidge. Gloria has been involved with Army dogs for so many years and has so much heart for her fellow kennelmates. She always makes handmade farewell gifts for departing handlers; we knew she would truly cherish this gift.

When she opened the box, it brought her great joy. And joy was hard to come by that day, as she lost her beloved pet malamute, Mimi, that same morning. It was also Gloria's birthday. Some people say that timing is everything. This was absolutely the perfect time and the perfect person. Gloria shared this photo of the afghan and the sweater, which is on her retired MWD, Max.

Wild and Wonderful West Virginia

MWD TSA is proud to announce that our second quarter care packages will highlight the wonders of the Mountaineer State of West Virginia.

Rich in history, steeped in legend, West Virginia boasts of natural beauty, rugged individuals, and a patriotic streak "a mile wide."

MWD TSA President, Nikki Rohrig, lives in this great state and is delighted to present it to the deployed handlers though an array of amazing gifts in MWD TSA's second quarter care packages, the theme of which is "Wild and Wonderful West Virginia."

The state colors of West Virginia are blue and gold so what better way to showcase those than the blue and gold of Gold Bond foot and body powder? West Paw, a great American-made dog toy company will be supporting teams with a donation of blue Hurley toys. Another sought after toy, a blue KONG, will be included courtesy of supporters like Animal Hospital of Thousand Oaks.

We are all on cloud nine with the D.O.G.

Bakery donation of little baby buffalo dog cookies inspired by the Marshall University mascot, Marco. Marshall University experienced a devastating loss in 1971, when virtually its entire football team was killed in a plane crash. The story was eventually chronicled in the film, "We Are Marshall." Located in Huntington, W. Va., Marshall University bills itself as a place where classes are small, but strong. MWD TSA, a "small, but mighty" organization, definitely appreciates those attributes.

Other donations include the ever-popular "Big Ass Brick" soap from Duke Cannon. The brick is modeled after the style of soap used by the military during the Korean War and is still manufactured in the same plant. If you are a guy, or if you have one in your life, you will want to know about Duke Cannon.

West Virginia is filled with wonderful people and wild places which are highlighted in the magazine *Wonderful West Virginia*. Many famous West Virginians have stirred our souls: Chuck Yeager, Mary Lou Retton, Brad Paisley, and Jessica Lynch,

among them. From wampus cats to the Hatfield side of the historic Hatfield-McCoy feud of the late 1800's, West Virginia is indeed wild and wonderful. We know the handlers and their partners will enjoy the showcasing of this great state in our second quarter care packages. Please stop by and thank our donor companies:

wonderfulwv.com
dogbakeryonline.com
dukecannon.com
westpawdesigns.com
cloudstar.com
sanfranciscobaycoffee.com
zukes.com
petchatz.com



Shown above: A few of the items which will be included in our second quarter care packages.

More donation photos will be highlighted in our next **Kenne! Talk.**

Magnificent Seven: More Honor 13 Recipients

The last seven of the Honor 13 recipients are featured as they open their Honor 13 Boxes in celebration of K9 Veterans Day!

Top Left: Bandit, a Springer Spaniel, shows off the array of goodies he received. Bandit served as a Specialized Search Dog (SSD) in the Army with one tour in Iraq and one in Afghanistan. He worked in the province of Farah. His handler says, "He'll always be there when I need him and I'll always be there when he needs me."

Middle Left: Coffee, a chocolate Labrador, also served as an Army dog in the role of SSD. "My time with Coffee is filled with too many special moments; she has taught me way more than I could have ever taught her. She has taught me about true friendship, unwavering dedication, and flawless loyalty. She will always be the truest of friends and a protector of all."

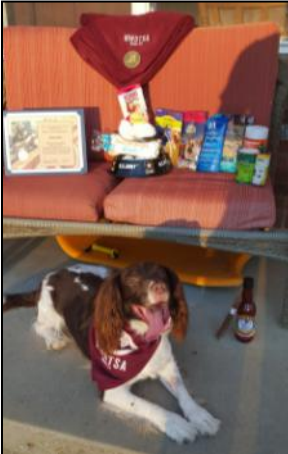
Bottom Left: This Army SSD is "numero uno". Literally, this is Uno. He's number one for a reason. "Uno served about five years, during which time we had several secret service missions. While deployed to Afghanistan, he saved me from stepping on a landmine on one mission, and also he had three finds in one day at a school that we were clearing."

Top Right: Army MWD Gory is flat out enjoying his stash. Treats and more treats, what more could a retired guy ask for? Gory will be 13 in August. "We have had him almost five years. We finally got to adopt him in mid 2011. Gory deployed twice and earned working dog of the year on Ft. Hood."

Middle Right: Army MWD Aron is laser-focused on a dog treat. As a narcotics dog on Ft. Hood, his stellar nose gave him a great career. Aron turned 13 in April. "He has taken to retirement finally. He has been very stingy with his toys, not wanting to release them for me to throw again for him, but in the last six months he is learning to share his toys."

Bottom Right: Ralph, a Belgian Malinois, served meritoriously in the U. S. Air Force for 12 years. During his tenure MWD Ralph was Seymour Johnson Air Force Base's sole narcotics detector dog. MWD Ralph's expertise was clearly defined while deterring smuggling operations at Pope AAF as a part of a joint FBI/ICE mission, where he provided narcotics sweeps for over 100 tons of cargo. MWD Ralph also performed flawlessly during Operation Nighthawk on three separate occasions.

Freida (Not pictured) Freida completes our Honor 13 recipients. MWD Freida L150, just over 11 years old, has performed various POTUS missions. She saw combat in Iraq 2008-2009 and Afghanistan with the Special Forces in 2010-2011. She had several down range finds of IEDs, weapons caches and explosive caches. She retired in 2012.



Lucca K458 Honored with Dickin Award

By Dixie Whitman

Lucca K458, a retired Marine Specialized Search Dog (SSD), was awarded the PDSA Dickin Award in London, England on Tuesday, April 4, 2016. The Dickin Award is the highest award which an animal may receive while serving in the military and is considered the equivalent of the Victoria Cross.

Since its inception in 1943 by Maria Dickin to acknowledge acts of bravery and devotion during wartime, the medal has been awarded only 67 times.

MWD TSA is proud to have recognized and honored Lucca's service and courage well before the rest of the world fell in love with her. Back in 2008 we featured Lucca as our MWD TSA Heroine Dog and her story is still available for everyone to read on our website. Lucca's nomination highlights her work seeking Improvised Explosive Devices, and lists part of her accomplishments at the time as including finds of IEDs, a car bomb, caches of homemade explosives, numerous concealed AK-47s, Dsh-Ks, and rounds, leading to the arrests of many insurgents.

Her legendary career continued well after that nomination. She was lucky enough to be partnered with two devoted Marine handlers, GySgt Willingham and Cpl Rodriguez. Rodriguez was Lucca's partner when she was injured. His selfless acts and quick reaction to her injury saved her life. She is now retired and living with GySgt Willingham's family.

Website story:

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

Please enjoy these photos:

Top right: Chris Willingham and Lucca in Iraq.

Second photo: A traditional photo of Camp Slayer kennel dog teams. This photo includes many heroic dog teams in addition to Lucca and Willingham.

Third photo: Lucca and her "boyfriend," Posha, pose in their handlers' uniforms.

Fourth photo: Embedded with an Army infantry platoon on patrol in Iraq.

Fifth photo: After injury, Lucca's recovery with Juan Rodriguez, the same Marine partner who saved her life.



Memorial Day: Remembering the Fallen

By Lance Cpl. Jonah Lovy

BEAUFORT, S.C. - "They, and we, are the legacies of an unbroken chain of proud men and women who served their country with honor, who waged war so that we might know peace, who braved hardship so that we might know opportunity, who paid the ultimate price so that we might know freedom," said President Barack Obama during a Memorial Day speech at Arlington National Cemetery.

Memorial Day holds a sacred spot on the calendar. Every year on the last Monday of May, Americans pause to remember the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation.

Ever since the start of the Revolutionary War, patriots have served to defend America's and other nations' freedom. Memorial Day is a day to commemorate their sacrifices.

The holiday originated as Decoration Day after the American Civil War in 1868. It was established as a time for the nation to decorate the graves of the war dead with flowers.

"Today, we are blessed to have young men, women, and families here who understand the price of freedom, and are willing to place America before themselves," said Col. Peter D. Buck, the commanding officer of Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort.

| List of Handlers KIA from OIF and OEF since 2006 | Service | End of Watch | OIF/OEF | MWD | Tattoo |
|--|---------|--------------|---------|---------|--------|
| Sgt Adam L. Cann | USMC | 5-Jan-06 | OIF | | |
| TSgt Jason L. Norton | USAF | 22-Jan-06 | OIF | | |
| Cpl Dustin J. Lee | USMC | 21-Mar-07 | OIF | | |
| Cpl Kory D. Weins | USA | 6-Jul-07 | OIF | Cooper | K154 |
| SSG Donald D. Tabb | USA | 5-Feb-08 | OEF | | |
| SFC Gregory A. Rodriguez | USA | 2-Sep-08 | OEF | | |
| Cpl Jeffrey R. Standfest | USMC | 16-Jun-09 | OEF | Ruppert | P390 |
| SPC Brandon Steffey | USA | 25-Oct-09 | OEF | Macy | Unk |
| LCpl Max W. Donahue | USMC | 6-Aug-10 | OEF | | |
| SSG James R. Ide V | USA | 29-Aug-10 | OEF | | |
| PFC Colton Rusk | USMC | 6-Dec-10 | OEF | | |
| LCpl William H. Crouse, IV | USMC | 21-Dec-10 | OEF | Cane | N603 |
| Sgt Zainah C. Creamer | USA | 12-Jan-11 | OEF | | |
| LCpl Peter J. Clore | USMC | 28-May-11 | OEF | | |
| Sgt Aaron Blasjo | USA | 29-May-11 | OEF | Hunter | P627 |
| Sgt Christopher M. Wrinkle | USMC | 31-Jul-11 | OEF | Tosca | Unk |
| MA1 John Douangdara | USN | 6-Aug-11 | OEF | Bart | Unk |
| Staff Sgt Christopher Diaz | USMC | 28-Sep-11 | OEF | | |
| LCpl Abraham Tarwoe | USMC | 12-Apr-12 | OEF | | |
| Sgt Dick A. Lee, Jr. | USA | 26-Apr-12 | OEF | Fibi | K080 |
| Cpl. David M. Sonka | USMC | 4-May-12 | OEF | Flex | T590 |
| Cpl Keaton G. Coffey | USMC | 24-May-12 | OEF | | |
| MA2 Sean E. Brazas | USN | 30-May-12 | OEF | | |
| Cpl Joshua Ashley | USMC | 19-Jul-12 | OEF | | |
| MA2 Michael Brodsky | USN | 21-Jul-12 | OEF | | |
| Veterinarian | | | | | |
| LTC Daniel E Holland | USA | 18-May-06 | OIF | | |



Recognize. Respect. Remember.

With great reverence, the listing above is a Memorial Day tribute to dog handlers that we know have been Killed in Action since 2006 in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan. If the handler's dog was lost at the same time, we have included that information, as well.

Left: A U.S. Marine Corps military working dog lays at the gravestone of Cpl. David Sonka during a Memorial Service May 2, 2015.

U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Phillip Houk.

Remembering MWD ULI (US NAVY, RET.)

Story by Suzanne Core

Photos by Suzanne Core, unless otherwise noted.

MWD ULI H333 (US Navy, Ret.) was honored at a memorial service at American Legion #38 in Fountain, Colo., March 13, 2016. His ashes were transported in the white Miata convertible he rode in during parades in his retirement. Uli's ashes were escorted by Lani Mitra Singh, with whom he spent his retirement years, and driver Jack Casey of the Colorado Patriot Guard.

Casey said, "Uli was a member of the Patriot Guard. He was special to us. He loved the Miata. He loved parades, but he didn't like the horses; he thought they were camels, suspicious."

Uli's ashes were escorted to the service by American Legion riders leading his car and Colorado Patriot Guard riders following the car. Casey and Singh carried in Uli's rosewood box through a Patriot Guard flag line

and American Legion honor guard and later spoke during his service. In attendance were Uli's fellow veterans and many friends, including MWD Jazmine, also retired, and a K9 Unit, Officer Brian Kelly and Brach, with Colorado Springs Police Dept. Uli's arrival and service were covered by the local affiliates of NBC, ABC and Fox.

MWD Uli was born in Germany June 3, 2003. He was trained in 2004 at the military's MWD Training School at Lackland AFB in San Antonio TX. His K9 Basic included explosive detection and patrol. He served two tours in Iraq and one in Africa. In Iraq, he located numerous weapons caches and explosive devices. On one occasion he alerted to an imminent danger and saved his handler and entire team.

In 2011, Uli was medically discharged due to a ruptured colon. In 2015, he was diagnosed with the cancer which ultimately

took his life. His retirement years were spent surrounded with those who loved him and treated him like the hero he was, made possible in part by the father of one of the team members whose life was saved in Iraq by Uli's alert. "I needed to save the dog who saved my son's life," he said.

Singh, Casey, the Patriot Guards and American Legion Post #38 joined to give MWD Uli the hero's memorial he, and each MWD hero, deserved. Even these tough veterans, women and men, did not remain dry-eyed.

During the service, "Guardians of the Night" was read. A few words sum up Uli and his peers: "I will remain ever silent, ever vigilant, ever loyal.... I am a Military Working Dog. We are the guardians of the night." End of Watch for hero MWD Uli, Feb. 7, 2016.

Right: MWD Uli H333 was remembered at a memorial service in Fountain, Colorado. Uli was a retired Navy dog.

Below: Lanai (Lani) Singh (left) and Jack Casey (right) carry Uli's ashes in a rosewood box through a Patriot Guard flag line.



Below: A photo of Uli attending a memorial for fellow military working dog, Emir. Uli and Emir went through basic military dog training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, together. After their service, they were both adopted by retired Spc. Lanai Singh.

Photo by Andrea Stone, Fort Carson, Colorado Public Affairs Office.



A Tribute to MWD “SSgt. BAK” KI46 PNDD



By Frank Yevchak

Photos courtesy of handlers

Bak was born in Germany on June 22, 2004. At 17 months old, he was sent to the MWD Training facility at Lackland AFB in San Antonio, TX. He then spent several months training in drug detection and patrol functions. Upon his graduation, Bak was deployed to South Korea, where he was destined to spend his entire military career. Bak was assigned to the 55th MP Kennel at Camp Casey and became part of the 503rd Military Working Dog Detachment.

Who would have thought this puppy would become the trusted partner of so many handlers? Thanks to his formidable nose, Bak became one of the best patrol narcotic detection dogs in the Army. He was invaluable during his deployment to the Korean Peninsula. In a little over seven years, Bak's detection work led to more than 20 convictions for drug offenses.

One handler, who adored Bak as much as Bak adored him, was SPC David Cartwright. During their service together, Bak and Cartwright competed in many events. At one competition in Hawaii, Bak placed first overall in tactical and non-tactical narcotic detection and third in a combat scout scenario. Their kennel was also named top overall kennel at the competition. Bak's competitive days ended in 2012, but he still went out at the top of his game. At Lackland AFB he finished 2nd

overall in narcotic detection, but he was unable to complete the event. His handlers felt that Bak would have placed first had he not been medically disqualified for heat exhaustion, but they recognized it was for his own protection.

Bak's formidable nose for finding narcotics made him an invaluable asset for the security of the bases he patrolled with his handlers for those seven years. He worked as a military police dog showing loyalty, courage and devotion to his handlers, but as everyone knows even a heroic K9 soon needs to pass the torch to younger heroes.

Shortly after his last competition, Bak was honored with a well-deserved retirement. Early in 2013, he found his forever home with MSgt. Scott Peirsol, his wife Faith and their son, in North Carolina. The Piersol's felt honored to have such an amazing dog as part of their family. But even in retirement, Bak continued to serve his country and protect those he loved.

When Bak arrived at his new home in North Carolina, he thought it was just another job. Scott said, "Bak would patrol the yard. He would search for things in the house as he learned to make the transition to being just another member of the family, but Bak wouldn't stop at being a war dog." So along with Bak's new MWD friend, Brit, he attended military and civilian events, supporting his brother and sister war dogs of all breeds. He would proudly display his colorful work vest emblazoned with patches and stars, along with his MP and Staff Sgt. stripes. Everyone, especially kids, adored Bak. They honored him with the respect that all military members deserved.

Through the power of social media, Bak's fame grew during his retirement. He touched the hearts and souls of thousands of people and became a hero to so many. There was a long list of those who wanted to be known as Bak's aunt, uncle, and even cousin.

As time went on, it started catching up with Bak. During his military service, Bak had endured rigorous training, work, and extreme weather, all of which took a toll on his hips. The Piersols considered getting a doggie wheelchair, but Bak had other ideas. He loved his family so much that he just went on being himself. He kept playing tennis like a champ, as if

nothing was wrong. But in July 2015, after the family moved to Fort Bliss in Texas, Bak faced more challenges. For months he underwent procedures for different medical issues, coming out of each one like a warrior. But on February 4, 2016, our hero could fight no longer. Bak passed away at the age of eleven, held close by his beloved family.

Bak has crossed over the Rainbow Bridge, and he now stands guard at Heaven's Gate for eternity. He is watching over his family and handlers, and he is undoubtedly playing ball with all the war dogs who crossed the bridge before him. Though Bak has finished his earthly mission, he remains in our hearts and souls forever. He will always be remembered for his unconditional love and devotion.

On a personal note to Bak, it was our honor and privilege to be part of your life. We will never forget you, you big moose. Rest in peace and watch over all of us left behind!

God bless you, brave hero, as you watch over your fellow soldiers from Heaven's Gate!

Love,

Uncle Frank & Cousin Lucky



Above: Bak's vest featured all manner of stars and stripes, unit patches and more.



Left: Bak K146 and partner Spc. David Cartwright took part in many K9 competitions.

Right: Bak celebrating on a field of flags.

Below Center: Bak retired to North Carolina and lived a great life with the Piersols, pictured here at the Special Forces K9 Memorial at Fort Bragg, NC.

Bottom Left and Right: MWD Bak K146 enjoys life, love, and liberty in the caring home of MSgt Scott Piersol and his wonderful family.



"BAK HAS BROUGHT OUR FAMILY SUCH INCREDIBLE JOY. WE ARE HONORED TO HAVE THIS RETIRED AMERICAN HERO IN OUR HOME."



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!

Kennel Talk is the proud recipient of multiple
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From the Archives



SFC Jesse Mendez (Ret.)

US Army and Triple Dipper veteran (WWII, Korea and Vietnam), SFC Jesse Mendez (Ret.), was the designer and lead trainer of the Army Scout Dog Training program at Fort Benning during the 1960's. He is shown here jumping out of a plane with his partner, Pal.

SFC Mendez' vision and endless energy were instrumental in creating memorial pedestals which surround the War Dog Memorial on Sacrifice Field at Fort Benning, Georgia. In honoring and venerating the Vietnam era dogs and dog handlers, many Vietnam "Dogmen" reconnected at the Fort Benning ceremonies for the first time since their tours of duty were completed.

We are honored to share this great piece of history from one of America's finest K9 men ever.