

August, 2009

Volume 1, Issue 3

www.mwdtsa.org

# Kennel Talk

Join MWD TSA now so you won't miss any of the photos, stories, news and highlights of 2009!

## Inside this issue:

<i>Long Hot Summer</i>	1
<i>Rico Nominated for Hero Dog</i>	1
<i>Easy as 1-2-3</i>	3
<i>Fort Benning Visit</i>	4
<i>Alabama War Dog Memorial</i>	5
<i>Tracking Dog Photos</i>	6

A big thank you to the Tracy Webb Memorial Foundation for your support of America's military working dogs and dog handlers.

## A Long, Hot, Sandy Summer in Iraq

Temperatures hitting into the 135 range coupled with a week long sand storm of Biblical proportion forged additional challenges for the dogs and troops in Iraq this summer. Here is a photo of MWD Bronco, a Fort Carson, Colorado dog in the heat of Iraq. This fabulous photo is in vast contrast with the sepia toned images taken during the height of the sandstorm when the entire sky was blighted and turned into an orange-brown dust.



Copyright MWD TSA 2009

## USAF Dog Rico Nominated for AKC Hero Dog Award

by Dixie Whitman

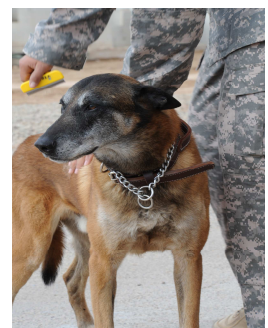
Each year the American Kennel Club offers an opportunity to nominate very special dogs to the level of "Hero Dog". Competition is very tough as there are a number of excellent dogs nominated, this is particularly true with Law Enforcement and Military Working Dogs. This year, MWD TSA was honored to write the nomination for Rico, handled by Philip Mendoza III. Attached is the nomination letter sent to the AKC.—

The last read on the thermometer was a blistering 122 degrees with a major sandstorm en route. Good thing Rico couldn't read the ther-

момeter or the weather forecast, as he might have protested this mission. It included road clearing, a non-descript euphemism for leading a foot patrol to ensure the path is not booby-trapped with explosives; using his nose to track down that tell-tale scent of explosive, wiring, and bomb parts that mean seriously bad news for anyone who encounters them. One miss and everyone has a grim day.

Rico is a nine year old Belgian Malinois trained in Bomb Detection and Patrol. He is based at Moody AFB, Georgia, but currently working with his partner, SSgt Phillip Mendoza

III, near Baghdad as part of the 332<sup>nd</sup> ESFG (Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron). General duties include vehicle and luggage searches and perimeter patrols inside the wire,



# Rico

Story continued on page 2

www.mwdtsa.org

Continued from Page 1



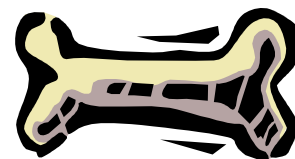
word and have similar philosophies in life. This is Rico's fourth deployment to Iraq and Mendoza's fifth. They both relish long hours of grueling work, but they play even harder. Rico works dangerous missions in unbearable heat for a pat on the head and a round of fetch with his multi-colored ball. While the grey in his muzzle affirms his age, he acts like a puppy with all of his "off work" foolishness. Rico seems to take a lesson from Ashley Montagu's wisdom: "I want to die young at a ripe old age." Each day he rises before dawn and is eager to go out and do his thing with his best buddy.

A recent emotionally rewarding find for this team was the uncovering of a roadway IED. Walking point at a dangerous roadway location, the team was conducting a search when Rico alerted strongly, convincing Mendoza that something wicked was in the route. They marked the area, and then ran back towards their patrol, Rico actually ahead of Mendoza chasing that crazy multi-

colored ball into relative safety. They called for explosive experts to clear the spot. What they found below the rocky road was in fact a very nasty weapon: a 152mm shell with additional explosives buried below the ground in an attempt to kill and injure Coalition Forces who frequented that roadway. It could have done immense damage and changed many, many lives for the worse, but it didn't; one more success for this amazing team.

After that find, Mendoza visited the chow hall and brought back two juicy rib-eye steaks for Rico knowing he deserved them. Mendoza plans to make Rico's retirement cushy by adopting him when this ebullient dog's military service is complete.

Congratulations to an awesome team.



"It could have done immense damage and changed many, many lives for the worse, but it didn't; one more success for this amazing team."

inside the compound, in relative safety. But oddly, this team prefers the adrenaline rush of work outside the wire, sometimes even in vineyards, orchards and fields which are much more like home than the moon-like landscape found in the Iraqi desert or the cluttered drab brown confines of base.

Rico and Mendoza, together for less than a year, gelled as a team in every sense of the

## MWDTSA invited to give presentation



Military Working Dog Arras is remembered in the presentation as a dog that gave his life for our country.

The German Shepherd Dog Club of North Georgia invited Military Working Dog Team Support Association to their August 4, 2009 meeting to give a presentation about the history, use and need for Military Working Dogs to the club. Included in the presentation will be a power point with many photos outlining both current and previous dogs.

One of the dogs honored is Arras, pictured on the left, who gave his life for our country.

Thousands of Military Working Dogs do a dangerous and difficult job around the world every day. They do it well and with enthusiasm as they have for years.

For more information on the German Shepherd Dog Club

of North Georgia please visit their website at

<http://gsdcnga.org/>

Or the website for the German Shepherd Dog Club of America at:

[www.gsdcga.org](http://www.gsdcga.org) for more information on this magnificent breed.



## Helping MWDs is as Easy as One...Two...Three



A military working dog is trained at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. Military working dogs participate in a 60- to 90-day training program during which they learn to detect explosives and drugs. They also receive deterrence training and learn how to protect their handlers. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Christopher Griffin/Released)

Organizations flourish because of good people doing the right thing. MWD TSA needs more of those good people.

Military Working Dog Team Support has been successful in getting supplies to our Military Working Dog teams, successes that challenge our limited numbers of people to get things done. We could use your help in a variety of ways.

**One: Time and talent.** One of the things that we are shortest on is having the time and talents to get everything done that needs to get done. If you have time to help with some of our duties on an ongoing, committed basis, we would love to

hear from you. Can you help with writing grant requests? Can you help with soliciting products-in-kind to be sent to the dog handler teams? Can you make presentations to local schools, churches or civic groups to explain our needs and what they can do to help? If you are a dog handler, can you take some time to write a first hand account of what your dog is doing which can be included in the newsletter?

**Two: Financial donations** A lot of what we do comes down to having the appropriate funding. We try to answer all requests that are made, but as word is getting out, our resources are being stretched. Join as a member, buy the t-shirts and mugs that we have available. Send a contribution as you can within your per-

sonal limitations. One dedicated supporter sends us \$5 faithfully on a monthly basis. With that \$5, we are able to ship one more toy, treat or grooming aid. It all adds up. Whenever you place an order online, check out the [igive.com](http://igive.com) shopping mall. MWD TSA is registered with iGive. To help us, it's very easy. Go to [igive.com](http://igive.com) and register. Select Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc. as your cause and shop as you normally would. MWD TSA receives a percentage of your online purchases. It costs you nothing, but every purchase you makes adds up and each quarter MWD TSA will receive a check with the proceeds of your combined orders. Right now, we generally receive about \$35 per quarter, enough

to ship three more Priority Mail boxes to our dog handlers. Imagine how many more boxes we could ship if everyone who received this message ordered online through the iGive site and designated MWD TSA as their chosen cause. No additional costs to you, but together with other supporters, one easy way to add funding in support of our missions.

**Three: Notes of Support** Cards and letters of support or pieces of artwork from children let our troops know that we here at home support them. That is one of the most important lessons learned from Vietnam. We must let our heroes know that we support what they do. For more information, email to [mwdtsa.dixie@yahoo.com](mailto:mwdtsa.dixie@yahoo.com).



## Fort Benning Kennel Visit

by Dixie Whitman



*New pedestal at the Fort Benning War Dog Memorial to honor Geronimo, a WWII MWD credited with raising \$16 million in war bond sales. Who could resist a paratrooping canine?*



*Top right:  
Fort Benning Handler  
trains her dog to watch a  
non-aggressive stranger.*

*Above: vehicle sign  
advising of dogs.*

*Bottom right:  
First hit and grab on.  
Training the MWD to  
grab the sleeve, apprehend  
and take down the subject  
when he is threatening or  
aggressive.*

Being a dog trainer to the core, my instincts are to positively reinforce acts of generosity, such as those made by our supporter Krisellen Wilson. Krisellen not only donated carloads of supplies to be sent off to the handlers last Christmas, she also stepped forward to volunteer her time.

My thought was a trip down to Fort Benning so she could have a look at the War Dog Memorial and to get an idea of the history of these dogs and handlers. Then, as I tend to do, I took it one step further and thought we might as well stop by the kennels at Fort Benning to meet and greet the current handlers.

What started out as an after-thought turned into an excellent day spent with the officers, kennel master and handlers at this wonderful Army post. We had met a few of these handlers earlier in the spring, but there are always changes in the military and most of the MWD personnel were new. It was a great opportunity to meet the handlers and to get the word out about MWDTSA.

We were treated to a tour of the temporary kennels, a dog demonstration



and then had a chance to turn tables and treat the handlers to a pizza lunch. We relished real conversations about what works the best to send for deployed dog handlers. It was encouraging to find out that much of what we are sending, including the FURminators is at the top of their "want" list. In fact, one of the handlers mentioned that having a

"FURminator" was like having gold.

Many thanks to CPT Church, First Sergeant Pearson, Kennel master Allred, the many talented and generous handlers and handsome and fearless Military Working Dogs at Fort Benning.

An excellent day!





# Alabama War Dog Memorial

A new memorial has been erected in the great state of Alabama to honor Military Working Dog Teams and offers the following insightful inscription.

*"An unheralded breed of soldier..."*

*Let all who read these words of gratitude and praise know that tens of thousands of America's fighting men and women owe their lives to the deeds and courage of War Dogs and their Handlers. Further, let it be known that many breeds of dogs, large and small, served our nation in times of war. All going into harm's way with distinction and valor, - unhesitating. Let us not forget these unsung heroes are soldiers, too. These valiant dogs protect our military men and women through countless perils, give comfort in uncertainty, and share the suffering and the risks in time of war. Over the decades, many of these dogs have made the supreme sacrifice, giving their own lives to shield our armed forces and military assets from hostile acts. Canines in the armed services continue that noble tradition around the world today.*

*This monument is dedicated to the patriotic people of Alabama for all to bear witness in remembrance to these faithful War Dogs and their Alabama handlers. Those who leave this place should remember the deeds and sacrifices of these four-legged soldiers. Furthermore, see in every dog the unconditional loyalty inherent in War Dogs and glimpse a reflection of their soldier-brother's heroic actions. These teams unhesitatingly fight for right and for our nation's freedoms. Lest we forget, we should hold them dear in our hearts and honor their courage."*

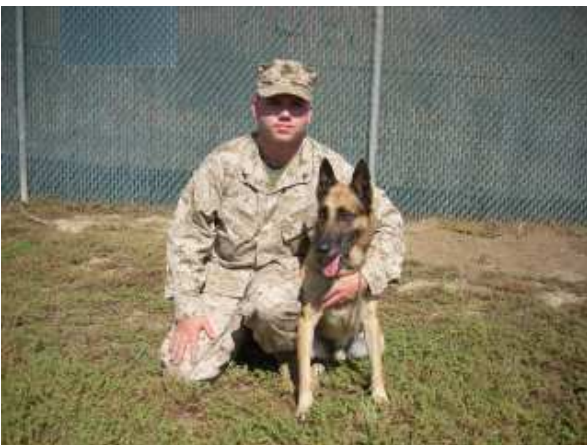
For more information, [www.alawdm.org](http://www.alawdm.org)



Photo above: Detail of Vietnam era Platoon following the lead of a Military Working Dog  
Below: View from the front



## You're Picture Perfect



Shared MWD photos.

**Left: MWD Amis and  
SSG Benjamin**

**Right: Marine MWD and  
handler Cpl Dennis**



## Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

MWD TSA

P. O. Box 5864

Canton, GA 30114

Phone: 404-451-2539

E-mail: [mwdtsa.dixie@yahoo.com](mailto:mwdtsa.dixie@yahoo.com)

**We are on the web!!**

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

**Sit. Stay. Support.  
Thank you TC Country**



PLEASE RECYCLE  
BY SENDING  
TO A FRIEND

04/03/2009 -  
U.S. Army Staff  
Sgt. Scott Van-  
valkenburg and  
military working  
dog, Nero  
M562, attached  
to 2nd Brigade,  
1st Cavalry  
Division, con-  
duct track train-  
ing in Baghdad,  
Iraq, April 3,  
2009. (U.S.  
Navy photo by  
Mass Commu-  
nication Spe-  
cialist 2nd Class  
Robert Whelan/  
Released)



**MWD TSA has recent  
articles published in:**

**The Veterans' Voice—  
May 2009**

[www.veteransvoice.com](http://www.veteransvoice.com)

**The Labrador  
Retriever Club  
Quarterly News—  
Summer 2009**

[www.thelabradorclub.com](http://www.thelabradorclub.com)

com

**K-9 Cop June-July  
2009**

[www.K9CopMagazine.com](http://www.K9CopMagazine.com)



04/03/2009 - U.S. Army Sgt. Zachary Delk and military working dog, Nero M707, attached to 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, conduct track training in Baghdad, Iraq, April 3, 2009. Track training teaches a dog to track by scent as well as sight. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Robert Whelan/ Released.)