



Complimentary Issue

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

Inside this issue:

Tails from Iraq 2

Coloring Page for kids 2

Boggs Doggos 3

Top Dog Fundraiser 4

Valentine's Day from Baggett Elementary 5

Acworth Elementary sends Christmas greet- 6

Special points of interest:

- MWDTSA appreciates your previous support. We hope you enjoy this complimentary issue of our initial newsletter. Be sure to get your Membership request submitted to receive our next newsletter filled with news, photos and stories about Military War Dogs.
- Don't miss the cute cards created by the kids in elementary class. Check out the blog linked to our website for more photos.

MWDTSA Memberships & Newsletter for 2009

MWDTSA is launching our newsletter, "Kennel Talk", a new communications piece to connect with MWD handlers, veterans and members. We call the newsletter "Kennel Talk" as it showcases our missions and reminds us of a fabulous time walking through the kennels at Fort Gordon last year as Veteran and Active Duty Dog Handlers shared stories about their dogs and connected with each other.

In short, it reminds us that the stories are indeed about the dogs.

We are also introducing memberships in MWDTSA. There are various levels of membership beginning at \$25.00. These can be purchased on line through our website at: mwdtsa.org/membership.html. Along with the memberships we are planning to have some "Thank you gifts", most notably this awesome T-shirt in either Navy or Pink.

Many thanks to the T-shirt designers, Jordan Zoroya, our new Fundraiser Coordinator, and her school pal, Jon Pow-ers.



MWDTSA Membership T-Shirts are available in Azalea Pink with black ink design and Navy Blue with white ink design. These are a gift beginning with the \$50 membership level.

In Search of Hero Dogs

by Dixie Whitman

In 2006 Rex D012 was honored as the German Shepherd Dog Club of America's (GSDCA) Hero Dog of the Year for his work in the snowy, craggy mountains of Afghanistan.

Rex and his handler, MA1 Chris Calloway, were feted at the GSDCA National Show held later that year in St. Louis, Missouri.

In 2008 Lucca and Tess, two dogs working in Iraq, were submitted as Hero Dogs to the American Kennel Club (AKC) and were selected for Honorable Mention Awards. Bios on all three dogs can be found on our website.

We are again looking for Military Working Dogs who have gone above and beyond their MWD training and have crossed over to Hero status. If you are the handler or kennel master of such a dog and would like for them to be considered for this honor, please let us know.

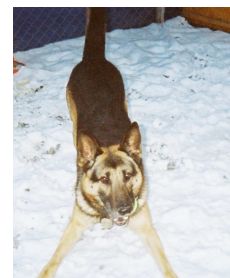
We will need the following information:

The dog's name, brand #, breed, sex and age. For the handler we will need the name and contact information.

We will also need a short explanation of why you feel the dog deserves the title of "Hero

Dog".

There are three different organizations that accept nominations. Once we have the information, MWDTSA will work directly with the handlers to get the full story on their dogs and will forward the information on for consideration.



Hero Dog
Rex D012

First “Person” — Tails of Iraq by Rex V



Rex V handled by
Sgt. James.

“But, then I do get to keep all the toys and treats that he doesn’t like. (Why he doesn’t like those liver flavored ones, I’ll never understand.)”

with Sgt. James

Hello all, my name is Rex V. I am a six year old German shepherd that has been drafted into the United States Army. (Yes, the draft still exists for those of us without opposable thumbs.)

I completed basic training at the 341st Training Squadron at Lackland AFB where I also received training in controlled aggression. This is my favorite part of my job since I get to use my size to chase and bite the bad guys that make life hard on normal people.

After I became a master of that trade, I was taught how to detect the odor of explosives; where I really get to earn my kibble. I have been trained to use my nose to locate small amounts of explosives and weapons which benefits me and my handler very well as we are now on our second deployment to Iraq. Together, we use my senses to locate small arms caches, as well as IED’s that are hidden and which might injure or kill my handler’s friends.

It is not bad here at all. It is not much different than when I am home. I am very thankful to the people back in the states that mail me packages. Although I think my handler is holding out on me, because I know ya’ll are sending candy and he never gives me any of that. But then I do get to keep all the toys and treats that he doesn’t like. (Why he doesn’t like those liver flavored ones, I’ll never understand.)

My days here are quite exciting. There are some very good mornings where my handler takes me to these big vehicles and we get inside. Then all the people inside the vehicle start petting me and asking my name. Then when the vehicle stops we all get out and go for a walk. On these walks I look for explosives and weapons.

The most interesting part is the people that live here. They follow and point at me like it’s the first time they have ever seen a dog, which I know is not true

because I see other dogs all the time but, they never come close to me. The kids here are very nice also. I try to say hello to them but they always run away when I turn towards them. My handler just laughs when this happens.

So far I have to say I have enjoyed my time here in Iraq. The work is very rewarding and the people are very nice for the most part. I know that I am doing my best to keep my handler and all his fellow Soldiers safe from harm.

If you’d like to ask me any questions, I’ll answer what I can. You can write to me via mwdtsa.dixie@yahoo.com and the message will get forwarded over.

Thanks for your support,

Rex V



Teacher, Parent & Grandparent Resource



Coloring Page available for free on the MWD TSA website. Other work from this artist can be seen at www.illusionsgallery.com

If you have a young child that enjoys creative art activities, need to find something different for your kids to do on a day inside or would like help with a history lesson, we have the coloring page for you.

Drawn by wildlife artist, Joyce Gibson, the coloring page found on the MWD TSA website allows kids to connect the relationships between handler,

military working dog and the American flag. It’s a free download that you can find under our Projects-Education-Coloring Page tab.

Getting even more creative, for your older children, print on a paper that will work for watercolors and let them explore the color changes in the dog’s coat and the creases of the flag. Others may enjoy using glue

and glitter. Who doesn’t like a “star-spangled” banner?

Kids completing the coloring page can mail to our mailbox or submit a scan of their personal work of art to mwdtsa.dixie@yahoo.com to be considered for inclusion on our website or newsletter. Please include name/age and parental permission.

South Cobb Eagles Eye Support for Military Working Dogs

South Cobb High School (SCHS) in Austell, GA is officially a "Cool School"! Even before it was granted that moniker by a local Atlanta TV station, MWD TSA could have told you this is a high school that really rocks. MWD TSA was invited to SCHS last fall by one of their many activity clubs to present information on Military Working Dogs.

SCHS has a dedicated Animal Club called "Boggs Dogs" which is supported by the entire campus community of administrators, teachers and students and is under the leadership of Chemistry Teacher, Rhonda Sykes.

For a sneak peek at some of the things they do, check out their website:

<http://www.freewebs.com/boggsdogs/>

Two of the student members, Alex and Jenny, went above and beyond the call of duty and wrote out Christmas cards

to be sent to all of the deployed dog handlers that we could reach across the theatre of operations in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Their cards were read and displayed



at kennels from the Syrian border to Afghanistan.

The Boggs Dogs group requested an opportunity to "adopt" some dog handlers and we matched them up with four Camp Pendleton Marines, just in time for Christmas.

When the students at South Cobb High School set out to do something, they do it right. The packages sent to their

adoptees including everything but the kitchen sink. (They inserted baby wipes in lieu of the kitchen sink.) The students also included personal notes written to each of the Marines. As SSgt Chris stated in his thank you note to Boggs Dogs, "Spending the holidays away from family can be tough, but receiving wonderful support from back home makes it easier. We read every card and note that was sent and I want to thank you for the kind words. Our dogs enjoyed the care packages, as well." In commenting further about their dogs, SSgt Chris shared the following,

"The dogs sleep in our rooms every night and they are spoiled rotten but when it's time to work, no dog is better than our Military Working Dogs." "They are not just dogs, they are Marines and Soldiers just like us. In fact, they give the dogs one rank higher than the handler because the dogs are never wrong.....and I have to carry all her stuff when we go on missions."



Boggs Dogs Animal Club of South Cobb High School, Austell, GA, adopted four Marine dog handlers from Camp Pendleton for Christmas.

"The dogs sleep in our rooms every night and they are spoiled rotten but when it's time to work, no dog is better than our Military Working Dogs."

SST Chris



Above: Two of the adopted dogs.

Left & right:

Students photographed while writing holiday wishes to their adopted Marine Handlers.



MWDTSA Cheers Top Dogs Fundraisers



Top Dogs: Ken Besecker, MWDTSA founder and Vietnam era dog handler presents an appreciation plaque to Betty Lou Stokes, Owner, and Regina Huebner, Manager, of Top Dogs Pet Boutique in Kennesaw, Georgia for an outstanding fundraising event.

Top Dogs Pet Boutique is definitely top dog when it comes to fundraising ability.

Working with Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc. (MWDTSA) beginning in early November 2008, the owners, staff and customers of Top Dogs initiated a fundraiser that went beyond anyone's expectations.

At the request of Betty Lou Stokes, President and CEO of Top Dogs Pet Boutique, Ken Besecker, Liz Besecker and Dixie Whitman gathered at the Kennesaw store location with other supporters for a kickoff event. A special guest and retired Military Working Dog, Egon, joined by his wonderful owners, James and Bonnie

Kessel, drove all the way up to participate from Albany, GA. James and Egon, we couldn't have done it without you!!! Egon is such a great ambassador for adoption of retired military working dogs; he is handsome, sweet and everything else a German shepherd dog should be.

The idea to present the fundraising opportunity to the community originated with Top Dogs owner, Betty Lou Stokes, after learning of the items needed to support the military dogs in Iraq. She contacted MWDTSA, and offered the fundraiser as a way to fund items and supplies headed to military K-9 teams deployed in war zones. A donation tree

was set up in a corner of the store where, for a small donation, clients could write their name and a holiday message on a flag or star. Those flags and stars were also sent over to the handlers as messages of support. Customers also had the opportunity to select items from the Wish List and bring those in to send off, too, and we got a HUGE amount of toys to send.

We received numerous messages of appreciation from the handlers. One handler shared this note, "Hey, just wanted to let you know that I got your package last night. We both gave our dogs a treat right away and from the crunching gnawing noises they were much appreciated. I will give Taran his new tug tonight and I'll take pictures to send. Thank you!!! " And from our friend, Sgt. James came this thought, "Thank you for your support. It means more than I would ever be able to tell you. Merry Christmas. Talk to you soon."

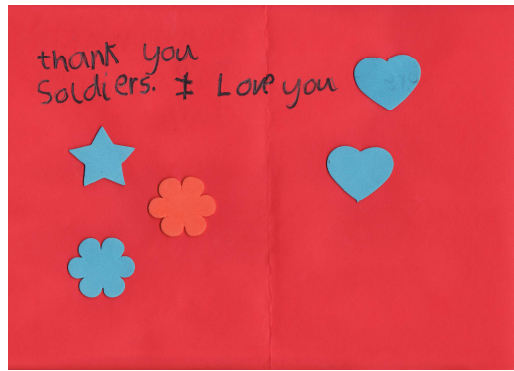
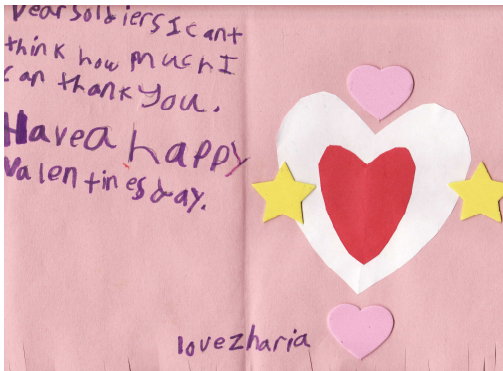
Check out Top Dogs website at: <http://www.topdogs.net>

Egon and his owner, James Kessel, a former Air Force dog handler, showed their commitment and support by helping kick off our incredible Top Dogs fundraiser.



"Egon is such a great ambassador for adoption of retired military working dogs; he is handsome, sweet and everything else a German shepherd dog should be."

Valentine's Day Messages Crafted by Kids

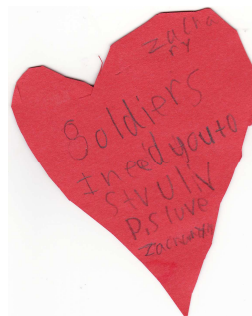


"Happy Valentine's Day" and "Thank you soldiers, I love you." are sentiments being sent to dog handlers along with some kid crafted Valentine's greetings by a Powder Springs, GA elementary school.

Ms. Paschal's first grade class worked hard selecting the right papers, gluing the right symbols and coming up with the exact wording they wanted to share with their heroes, our military working dog handlers

and dogs.

Enjoy looking at some of the creations sent to kennels in Iraq from FOB Echo to COB Speicher.



Baggett Elementary students send their love to deployed handlers and dogs.

You're Picture Perfect



Shared MWD photos.

Left: MWD Amis and SSG Benjamin

Right: Marine MWD Johnny celebrating Christmas. Thanks guys, for sharing these intimate portraits of your dogs.

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

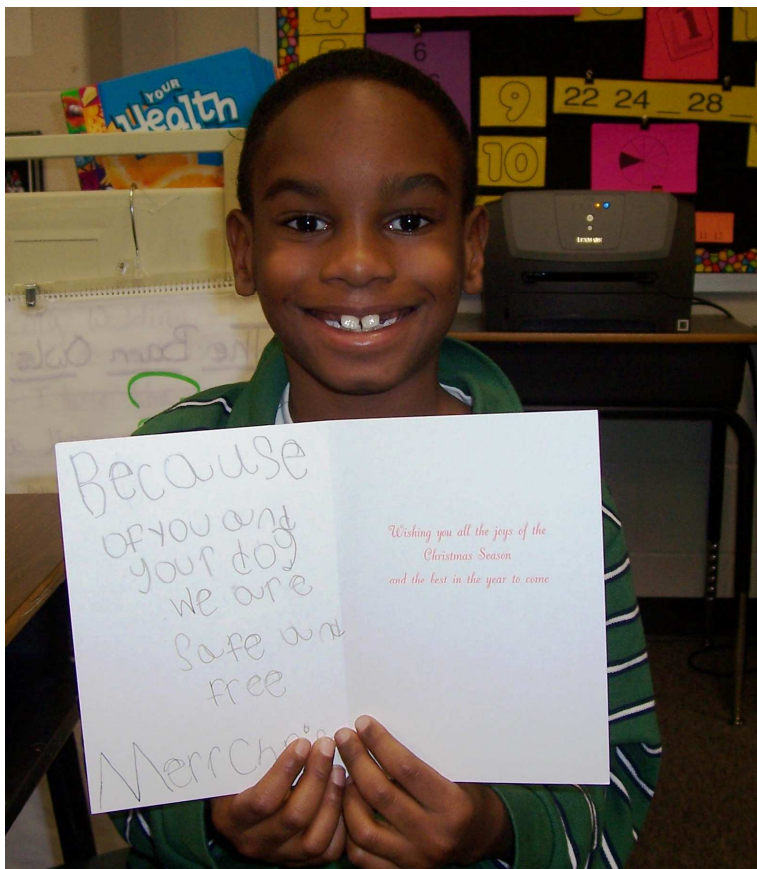
We are on the web!!

www.mwdtsa.org

Sit.Stay.Support.
Thank you Invisible Fence!!!



**PLEASE RECYCLE
BY SENDING
TO A FRIEND**



"Because of you and your dog, we are safe and free. Merry Christmas." affirms the greeting from one second grader. What a great message to send for the holiday!!

Second Graders Offer First Class Holiday Wishes

**"Thank you and your
dog for keeping us
safe & protected.
Merry Christmas.
From Nicholas"**



Mrs. Heather Simon and her enthusiastic class of 20 Second Graders at Acworth Elementary were inspired to share their holiday spirit by creating unique Christmas greetings for the Dog Handlers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

All cards included personal notes and were decorated with a lot of color and style, highlighting traditional holiday themes along with artwork unique to the dog handlers' world.

Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc. (MWD TSA) was delighted to receive this gift of time and talent from these wonderful kids and forwarded the greetings over to the men and

women working in Iraq.

"I passed out the cards to all the handlers and they were happy to have something created by kids," explained one handler who received notes of support. From another, "It really brightens our day to get mail. We have created a little

Christmas display at the kennels/house where we work and live. It has a small tree with lights, a clock and a train. Hanging on the wall behind the display we have taped the Christmas cards that we have received." Thank you, Mrs. Simon's class. Job well done.

