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Five fabulous,
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T-Shirt designs ~
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Roy-Smith and
Christian Print
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Going Home Then and Now

Otis, part Labrador and part beagle, was a product of the Vietnam era "Superdog Program". His Combat Tracker Team was awarded a Bronze Star, which he sports on his yellow "Cav" bandana.

At the end of the Vietnam War, Otis was among an estimated 204 War Dogs who were returned to American soil. His handler had heard rumors over the years that Otis may have made it back. In October of 2010, MWD TSA was able to confirm Otis' repatriation to the United States.



By Dixie Whitman

From the first time that I was introduced to military working dogs and veteran handlers at Fort Benning, Georgia in October of 2000, I was stunned and over-whelmed with grief when I learned about the fate of the majority of Vietnam War Dogs. I simply could not get my head around that loss.

I witnessed first hand the anguish and heartache experienced by Vietnam handlers, even thirty-five years later, when remembering their partners. These handlers could not foretell what the fate of their dogs would be, some even extended their tour in Vietnam to avoid leaving their dogs.

The dogs were trusted with the handlers' lives and the lives of every man in their combat patrol or inside the wire of an installation being protected by K9.

The data on the After Action Reports shows a huge calculable difference in lives lost in areas where dogs were in use versus areas where dogs were unavailable. Trusting the dogs made good sense as they are credited with saving over 10,000 lives in Vietnam alone, if these statistical differences are extrapolated.

What is inexcusable, sickening and causes an unending sadness to these veterans and all

dog lovers is the knowledge that, of the over 4,000 dogs generally accepted as having served in Vietnam, only 204 are estimated to have made it HOME.

Things have changed now, thankfully, and dogs are brought back with their handlers. They are adopted out at the end of their careers. But, I've always wondered how the dogs from Vietnam were selected for return. Who made the decisions? I didn't have to look far to find the answers. MWD TSA co-founder and our first Treasurer, Ken Bessecker, shares with us Goin' Home his recollection of the approximately 100 dogs he was able to send HOME.

www.mwdtsa.org

Walking Post

by Dixie Whitman

Walking post was my responsibility, along with the handler the Air Force assigned to me. Heading towards nightfall, we loaded in the back of a truck and then drove out, with several other teams, to be posted along the perimeter of our Air Base.

My responsibility was serious. I had to stand guard all night long on the stretch of boundary to which I and my human counterpart were assigned. We had to keep the base assets and personnel safe. My handler was also my responsibility. You know, he worked hard, but he had many shortcomings. Lord, he could barely hear the quiet threats of the night and he couldn't smell a snake if it bit him; which wasn't an idle threat.



During the Vietnam War, dogs like Duke X601 guarded base personnel and assets at Air Force Bases across southeast Asia; Vietnam and Thailand.

We had maybe 200 x 200 yards to guard, depending on the terrain and conditions. There were things out there in the dark, there really were. Most nights I didn't worry my handler, too

much. We'd walk, endlessly it seemed and then, for a few brief moments, if all seemed well, we might sit to take a load off. My buddy talked a lot about a place called home and I loved to listen to his voice.

Home sounded great, I could hardly wait to get there.

My handler was nervous much of the time, but heck, you couldn't blame him. I mean he was all of 19 and sometimes there were people out there trying to kill us. And the night, well, it does take its toll when you are at war and fear is already in the forefront of your mind. Usually things went smoothly, but every so often, just enough to keep us on our toes, we were challenged. I never failed my challenge, I never failed my country, but most importantly, I never failed my partner.

I know my buddy is anguished still about the time we were in Vietnam. But, he needs to know that I'm still watching over him. I am still his "Guardian of the Night".

MWDTSA is One Beneficiary of Fundraiser by Former Handlers

Our good friends from the Vietnam Security Police Association (VSPA) recognize the important services that our organization is providing to our dog handlers and are including MWDTSA in the current fundraiser.

If you have an interest in collectibles of commemorative military police shields, pins or brassards, this is a



great opportunity for you. Shown at left is only one prize out of four different prizes that are being raffled.

Time is of the essence. Checks must be received by September 17, 2011. Please go to our website for complete photos and information on all of the great collections being raffled off during this wonderful fundraiser.

To get complete details and photos of the prizes from this fundraiser, go to:

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

Thanks to the Military Missions Program & Bethany United Methodist Church. Your donation will touch many lives.

Goin' Home!

By Ken Besecker, Lt.Col. USA (Ret.)

Writer's Note: The information provided in this article is based on my recollections from June 1970-June 1971. Others may have different experiences and different memories. My Vietnam service was with the US Army 62nd Infantry Platoon (Combat Tracker) (62 IPCT) and United States Army Republic of Vietnam (USARV) Dog Training Detachment (DTD).

My first experiences in Vietnam was as a 2nd Lt. with the 62nd Combat Tracker team. It was a far cry from the Scout Dog training that I had received and for which I had prepared at Fort Benning, GA. But, it was the Army and we always retained rigid flexibility.

In November 1970 I was reassigned from the 62nd IPCT to the USARV DTD as the First Air Cavalry Division (Airmobile), now the First Cavalry Division, began standing down in Vietnam.

At DTD I was, in part, initially involved with in-country training for newly assigned Scout and Combat Tracker Dogs, as well as new handlers assigned to Vietnam. Additionally, refresher training was provided to in country dogs, handlers and Combat Tracker teams.

In early 1971, I was informed that, as the United States military was standing down in Vietnam (which would take until 1975 to finalize), we were going to initiate returning dogs to, Lackland AFB, America, HOME.



Army Handler, Brian, was able to adopt his former partner, Rony, and bring him home to enjoy his retirement.

I was to assist in the evaluation of US Army Combat Tracker and Scout Dogs to be returned to the Continental United States (CONUS), America, HOME.

There was a detailed criteria established for dogs eligible to go HOME. This criteria involved, in part, the dog's age, health condition and performance. An initial medical and training records screening was conducted at various Army Scout Dog and Combat Tracker units.

Several medical conditions were absolute disqualifiers for any dog to go HOME. In particular, if a dog had any history of Tropical Canine Pancytopenia (TCP), (also known as Canine Ehrlichiosis and other names), a blood disease carried by the Brown Dog Tick, that created

an automatic disqualifier. I believe "red tongue," a nonfatal, nonsuppurative glossitis, was also an immediate disqualifier.

In addition to dogs' health conditions, age was a critical factor. I'm not certain what the age cutoff for a dog to qualify was, but younger dogs were preferred. After all, in retrospect, as the US Government considered these dogs to be property, the intent was likely to return the dogs for more work instead of provide them an earned retirement.

The dogs' field performance was a vital consideration for being returned HOME. As part of this criterion, I travelled most of Vietnam to visit various Scout Dog and Combat

Tracker Dog units to review each provisionally qualified dog's medical and training records. Part of this review was to discuss the dog's training and combat performance with the handler, Platoon Commander (a Lieutenant) and the training NCO. On many occasions I deployed on missions with the Scout Dog handler (usually walking as his shotgun) to first hand observe the dog's performance and personality.

One of my surprises (having spent most of my tour in the southern part of Vietnam) during my first trip to a unit near the DMZ was how cold it got at night. A sleeping bag was essential field gear on future visits.

After many months of evaluations and reviews by trainers at DTD and veterinarians at various locations and, of course, serious difficult decisions by dog unit personnel, an initial pool of dogs was selected for return HOME.

Finally, in the spring of 1971, the first 50 or so dogs were loaded (in standard US Military shipping crates) on a low boy trailer. That was an amazing experience and sight with excited handlers, frenzied veterinarian technicians and a gaggle of on lookers as the crates were stacked and strapped in place. There was truly a buzz in the air, a sense of fulfillment and happiness. Our partners were going HOME.

I believe the dogs were then taken to Bien Hoa Air Force Base or Saigon and loaded on a C-141 to be flown HOME.

I remember that I stood and

Thank You, Enterprise Holdings Foundation

As an animal lover and a US Army Veteran (Gulf War), I had heard about the life saving work Military Working Dogs are doing on a daily basis. Several of my currently serving brethren had told me stories of the heroism these dogs show in the field and at home. I had heard multiple first person accounts of canine valor

(detection of improvised explosive devices, search support and combat as well as providing comfort to our troops who are in harms way). My family and I also became familiar with some of these great working dogs through Halo Animal Rescue, a local animal shelter. that we support.

I did some online research and came across the MWD TSA website and reached out to Susan Colinan to determine what I could do to help out these Hero Dogs. Susan explained to me about the Wish List for the organization including FURminators, dog cots and everyday supplies. I decided to apply for a grant from my employer Enter-

prise Holdings for MWD TSA. After some research into the organization, Enterprise Holdings Foundation donated two thousand dollars to MWD TSA. I am very happy that we could help out, in some small way, an organization that supports these amazing dogs. Thank you.

Dave Dommel

Goin' Home

Continued from page 3

watched the dogs (war veterans) loaded on the aircraft and waited until the plane was in the air. A member of DTD accompanied the flight to Lackland Air Force Base and then returned to DTD. Sometime later we sent the second shipment of approximately 50 dogs HOME.

Were more shipments made after the two I witnessed? I don't know, but I certainly hope so. I hope there were many more dogs, like Sam, a large black Labrador Retriever.

Sam's handler was killed in action shortly before I arrived at the 62 IPCT. Sam was nearing the end of his working days and there was no handler to work him. Sam became a King of the kennel and often was allowed to just roam the unit area when someone was there to watch him, play ball or whatever.

The Commander of the unit to which the 62 IPCT was attached mentioned several times that he remembered Sam from the Commander's previous tour with the same unit. Indeed, he more than mentioned SAM. He wanted Sam to be his mascot and go wherever he went. I explained I couldn't do

that because Sam was a MWD, etc. Eventually, I wore down. (Hope the statute of limitations has passed). I completed a death certificate for Sam indicating he had been killed in action; took the certificate to the 1st Cavalry Division veterinarian for his signature and Sam was no longer a MWD. Sam became instantly retired!

Soon afterward, my time came to get on a Freedom Bird and return home. My tour in Vietnam had ended. My transfer from Infantry to Military Po-

lice came about and I began my assignment at FT Hood, TX.

At the time, those of us involved in the Military Working Dog (MWD) program believed all our friends and buddies, 4 legged soldiers, would be similarly returned HOME.

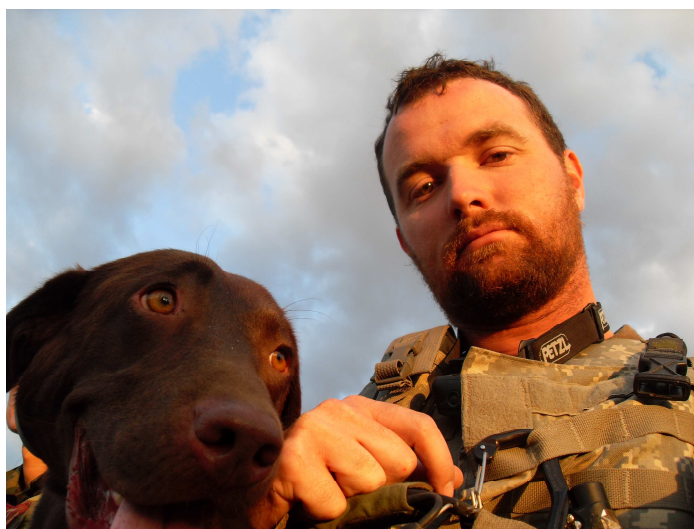
US history documents our government did not so honor those who gave so much. Our protectors asked only to be loved and spend time with us and were willing to do anything we asked them to do. They suffered se-

vere heat, leeches, ticks, parasites, blood diseases and many other maladies. They would work until they dropped, just to please us.

I am motivated by the desire to ensure that the final treatment of MWDs from Vietnam will never happen again and just as importantly, that the treatment dog handlers and all other veterans who served in Vietnam will not be repeated. It is my motivation that to the extent I can influence anything, never again, will one generation of veterans and other citizens ever abandon veterans of another generation.

These canine veterans suffered a horrible fate after giving so much to America. The American Military Working Dogs who were not returned HOME were either euthanized (the fortunate ones) or assigned to the South Vietnamese military.

The vast majority of our War Dogs assigned to work in Vietnam did not have a happy ending. However, comfort comes in knowing, for absolute certain, over 100 of our heroes made it HOME.



Specialized Search Dog, Lucy, was adopted by her former handler, Scott, and now retrieves for fun at home.

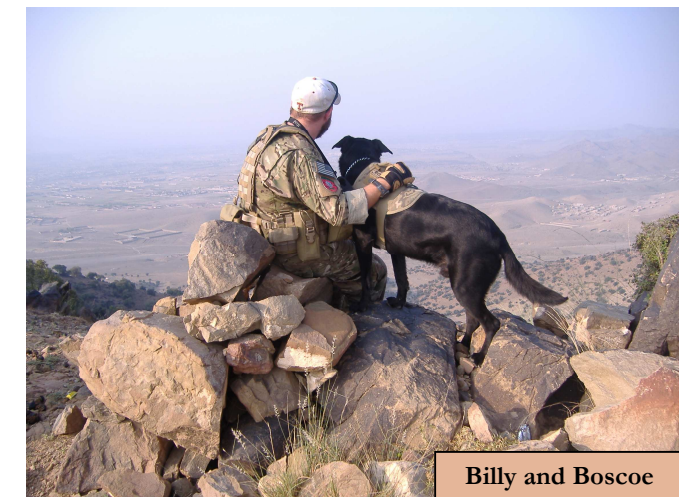
www.mwdtsa.org

K9 Koffee Klatch—The Support Comes Pouring In

Partnering with exquisite coffee roasters and brewers across America, MWDTSA is introducing our new program: K9 Koffee Klatch. We are soliciting donations of ground coffee from each coffee house we contact to place in our care packages.

We know that our handlers enjoy the taste of a great cup of “Joe” and that these men and women hail from far and wide. It seemed only appropriate to start making requests from far and wide in order to try to get “a taste of home” over to our handlers; therefore, with this coffee drive, we reached out with greater efforts to smaller roasters.

In fact, we are so excited by our responses that we are hoping you, our supporters, will make an extra effort to stop by whenever you are in an area serviced by one of these participating companies. Or, check out the websites of our great supporting companies and try a new brew via an online order. Ei-



Billy and Boscoe

ther way, please remember to thank the participants for their support of MWDTSA's K9 Koffee Klatch.

When I Googled “donations of coffee” the first company that popped up was Green Mountain Coffee Roasters (GMCR) in Vermont. Our Webmaster is currently in Vermont and active with a hiking organization in the Green Mountains so I was very excited when GMCR said “Sure, we’ll donate.” (Note to Webmaster Jonathan: Please drink a

lot of coffee this summer to thank them.)

The second coffee company, Gimme Coffee, in New York City, said “yes” immediately. How exciting “yes” on the first two requests. The next company, Community Coffee Company IS coffee in Louisiana so our team member from Louisiana made that contact on our behalf and they promised bags of coffee each quarter. Oh yes, they did!

Coffee companies from “sea to shining sea” participated in an effort to show our deployed K9 handlers that we love and appreciate them. And, I do mean “from sea to shining sea” – Gimme Coffee from New York City to San Francisco Bay’s Roger’s Gourmet Coffees.

Imagine what a great cup of coffee will taste like to a handler sitting in a cold mountain pass in Afghanistan. In those moments, I can almost imagine the aroma of a cup of coffee, like Raven’s Brew, would reveille the scent receptors in the handler’s nose as strongly as the scent being searched by the Military Working Dog.

MWDTSA appreciates the support of the companies below. Additionally many thanks to Linda Booker, our awesome Member at Large and my wonderful sister, Jeanne Gilmore Dedrick for making K9 Koffee Klatch contacts on our behalf. Due to the combined efforts of everyone involved, coffee support is truly pouring in.

Name of Coffee Partner	Partner Website	State represented	Type(s) of Coffee Donated
Green Mountain Coffee Roasters	greenmountaincoffee.com	Vermont	Vermont Country Blend
Gimme! Coffee	gimmecoffee.com	New York	Mocha Java
Community Coffee Company	communitycoffee.com	Louisiana	Dark Roast and Coffee Cups
Raven’s Brew Coffee	ravensbrew.com	Alaska/Washington	Ebony Pearls French Roast
Roger’s Gourmet Coffee & Tea Market	gourmet-coffee.com	California	San Francisco Bay French Roast among others

Please thank businesses that support us with your patronage. See our current sponsors at: <http://www.mwdtsa.org/sponsors.html>

National POW/MIA Recognition Day Observance

The National POW/MIA Recognition Day will be observed this year on Friday, September 16. Many Americans, especially our Vietnam Veterans, take time on this date to remember those who have been held as Prisoners of War (POW), as well as those still Missing in Action (MIA).



"No One Left Behind"

As of June of this year, there are 1,687 individuals reported by the Defense Department's POW/MIA Office as American personnel

missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War.

The National League of Families' POW/MIA flag symbolizes the United States' resolve to never forget POWs or those who served their country in conflicts and are still missing. Please take an extra moment on September 16th to remember our POW MIA, and their families.

What's an EIN? Ours is 13-4346918

Similar to an individual's Social Security Number, a federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) identifies a business for tax purposes.

Also called a Tax Identification Number (TIN), the EIN is issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), which uses this number to

identify charities and businesses that are required to file various tax returns.

Contrary to some misconceptions, credit bureaus and credit issuers can tell the difference between SSN and EIN numbers. SSN numbers can be validated as to origin and state / year of issuance. The credit bureaus and issuers

are highly trained in fraud detection and this is why the EIN is not considered sensitive information, and is freely distributed by many businesses by way of publications and the internet.

Supporters wishing to do an employee matching donation or those wanting to request a grant or in-kind product do-

nation from their company on behalf of the dogs and dog handlers will need this number and we are happy to share it with you.

The number you need is 13-4346918. We are happy to answer any questions that you may have and appreciate all donations that are made to our organization.

Seymour Johnson Air Force Base—MWDTSA visits NC

We stopped by Seymour Johnson AFB in North Carolina for a quick kennel visit and staff recognition. We handed out T-shirts, KONGs and had a North Carolina style barbecue lunch with some of the kennel staff.

It was a great opportunity to introduce MWDTSA to these handlers, learn a bit about them and just kick back and relax for a few minutes in the company of good folks.

To SJAFB Handlers- I cannot thank you guys enough for sharing some of your day with us! Dixie



Thanks to the great kennel staff at Seymour Johnson AFB for their time and an opportunity to see Ralph work!



Fabulous & Fabled MWD TSA T-Shirts On Sale

MWD TSA is excited to debut our five newest designs of fabulous MWD T-shirts with an opportunity to expand your T-shirt collection, support the dog teams and save some real cash, too. It's our T-shirt Extravaganza Sale and it starts now and ends September 15th, 2011.

For two weeks, you can pick up this unbelievably awesome **What Dogs Really Want** T-shirt at the regular cost of \$19.95 and get one **Trust Your Dog** T-shirt at \$9.99. That's a 50% discount on the second shirt.

What Dogs Really Want shirts are designed with now-retired Specialized Search Dog, Lucy's, stylized photo taken when she was working in eastern Afghanistan.

We have always done fundraising with T-shirts. We are bringing back some of our

retired designs with a shiny updated new look, thanks to the clever printing processes at Christian Print Shop, our T-shirt vendor. Proceeds from the T-shirt sales will be

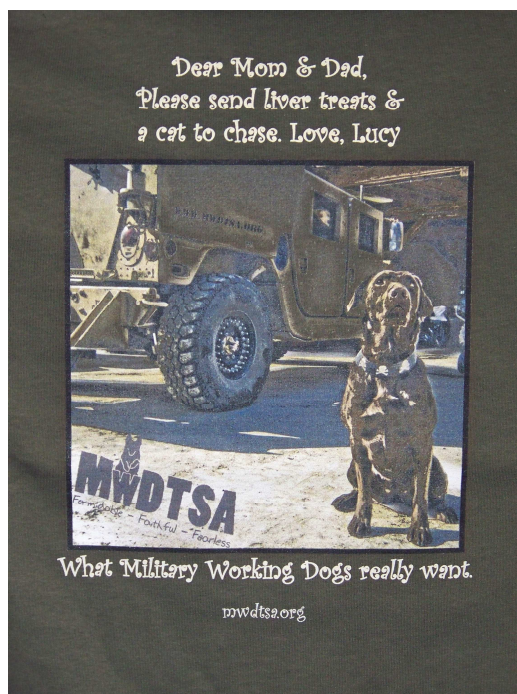
turned into FURminators, shampoos and pet wipes to keep the dogs clean, the highest quality dog treats available, collapsible water bowls for outside the wire

missions, and KONG toys for play and rewards. For the handlers, we may send a great pair of socks, coffees, magazines, T-shirts or grooming supplies. Perhaps even a Twinkie or two.

Every package we send brings a reminder of HOME and the knowledge that our teams are not alone, that we stand behind them and appreciate the difficult, dirty and unheralded work they do.

Have a look at our great new array of t-shirts and we think you will be delighted to send us an order to expand your dog T-shirt wardrobe and simultaneously support America's Military Working Dog Teams.

No cats were harmed in the making of these T-shirts.



Order here: <http://www.mwdtsa.org/estore.html>

A Personal Invitation to Handlers & MWD TSA Supporters

CBS may have killed Mike Franks, his character on NCIS, but Muse Watson is still my favorite actor. He has always been supportive of our efforts for the dogs and handlers. And, as a dog owner, he understands the human-animal bond.

If any MWD TSA supporters or dog handlers will be in the Branson, Missouri area during the November-December time-frame, be sure to stop by and see Muse in person at The Starlite Theatre. He will reprise his film role in the live stage adaptation of the movie,



"A Christmas Snow".

The movie came out almost a year ago and it is one of those lovely films with a fabulous and uplifting message about forgiveness and the importance of family.

For more information and to purchase tickets, you may contact The Starlite Theatre box office at: 417-337-9333 or go online at: <http://www.starlitetheatre.com/>

And, if you get a chance to meet Mr. Watson after the play, please be sure to thank him for his support of Military Working Dogs.

Military Working Dog Team
Support Association, Inc.

Photo Page

Sit. Stay. Support.

MWD TSA
P. O. Box 5864
Canton, GA 30114
Editor: Dixie Whitman
Phone: 404-451-2539
Email: info@mwdtsa.org



We are on the web!!

www.mwdtsa.org

Follow our Blog for more photos.



PLEASE RECYCLE
BY SENDING TO
A FRIEND



We supplied this team with several items, including some grooming supplies to get Jalk all spiffed up in time to meet General Petraeus, as he retired from active duty. Jalk appears to be looking for an opportunity to insert himself into the conversation between the general and the handler.



U.S. Army canine Staff Sgt. Rex and his handler, Staff Sgt. Cully Parr, with 1st Battalion, 78th Military Police Detachment, 89th Military Police Brigade, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, rest before a weapons cache search. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Edward Reagan/Released)

Thank you, Hawaii Pacific University Student Nurses Association