



Kennel Talk

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Above: Ron Torres, Florida-based K-9 training agency head trainer, takes a bite from Halo, Newport News Police Department working dog, during training at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., July 25, 2017. Local agencies from around Hampton Roads were invited to practice decoy development and canine bite-building techniques with the agency trainers.

The Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc. touches the lives of dogs and people near and far.

This issue's articles and photos take us across the country, from Colorado, through Kansas, Texas, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, and on to Indiana before skipping over to England.

Our parting shot is from Ohio.

Subscribe at MWD TSA.org to see where we connect next month!

Military working dogs bite into joint training

Story and photos by Airman 1st Class Kaylee Dubois

Canine handlers from local police departments joined the 3rd Military Police Detachment for military working dog training at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, July 24-27, 2017.

The detachment brought in a Florida-based agency that trains police and military working dogs all over the world. The team taught the detachment—along with their Newport News,

Chesapeake and Virginia Beach, Virginia, guests—different ways to engage their dogs with potential perpetrators.

U.S. Army Pvt. Levi Graham, 3rd MPD military working dog handler, said although biting a human is unnatural to dogs, one of the training's goals was to teach the handlers to drive the dogs' desire to bite a perpetrator, and not just training equipment.

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Joint Training continued from page 1

With the safety of the handlers, trainers, dogs and even the perpetrators in mind, the working dog handlers donned tactical bite suits while practicing “decoy” development and canine bite-building techniques. To better simulate real-world possibilities, the handlers also hid bite guards under different colored shirts to keep the dogs from associating the equipment with biting a perpetrator.

“We want the dog to react to the behaviors, not just a visual stimulus,” said Scott Clark, Florida-based agency head trainer. “We don’t want the dog equipment fixated; we want the dog focused on the true engagement of a person.”

Hoping to excite the dogs, the handlers shouted words of encouragement and made high-frequency sounds. During the dogs’ excited state, the handlers focused on enhancing their dog’s desire to bite, the strength of their bite and their drive forward through the bite.

According to Clark, working dogs give law enforcement officers an advantage when restraining a criminal, and can eliminate the need for officers to use a weapon.

“We want to prepare the dogs professionally and to their full capability to perform in the jobs that they do,” said Clark. “Teaching these fundamental skills, encouraging and developing the dog’s bite, is crucial for safety and tactical issues.”



Above: U.S. Army 3rd Military Police Detachment military working dog handlers look on as UUnion, 3rd MPD military working dog, practices bite building training at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., July 25, 2017. The detachment brought in a Florida-based agency which trains police and military working dogs all over the world.

U.S. Army Sgt. Richard McNully, 3rd MPD military working dog handler, said providing advanced training for the local police departments is mutually beneficial for both on- and off-post communities.

“We work heavily with the police in Hampton Roads, so the more training we get with them, the better we will work together to protect our community,” said McNully. “If we ever need the local police on post, or if they need us out in the community, we will have the relationship needed to work together.”

The working dogs are considered an advanced detection resource for both the military and local law enforcement departments. With their noses to the ground, the working dogs continue to support the safety and security of the Hampton Roads community.

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Joint Training continued from page 2



Above: Scott Clark, Florida-based agency head trainer, anticipates a bite from Mery, 3rd Military Police Detachment military working dog, during training at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., July 25, 2017. The four-day training seminar included classroom discussion and hands-on training to teach handlers how to encourage their dog to bite a person, if needed, and not just training equipment.



Above: U.S. Army Pvt. Levi Graham, 3rd Military Police Detachment military working dog handler, prepares to release, Mery,



Above: Halo, Newport News Police Department working dog, waits his turn to practice bite-building techniques at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., July 25, 2017.



Above: Jonathan Hatton, Newport News Police Department (NNPD) K-9 handler, encourages Halo, NNPD working dog, as he restrains Scott Clark, Florida-based K-9 training agency head trainer, during bite training at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., July 25, 2017. The trainers hid bite guards under different colored shirts to keep the dogs from associating biting a perpetrator with training equipment.

MWDTSA Visits Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland

Whether in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, or Coast Guard, anyone assigned to dog handling begins their training at Lackland. Handlers around the U.S. refer to Lackland so frequently that a trip there is essential to understanding our nation's MWD program.

On July 24 and 25, six MWDTSA volunteers from four states converged in Texas to learn about the MWD breeding program, foster care, puppy training, handler training, and medical care. As well, we visited the Military Working Dog Teams National Monument, 802nd SFS kennel, Security Forces Museum, and Nemo memorial. Our tour guides spent a generous amount of time educating us, and the sheer volume of information they shared felt a little like drinking from a fire hose.

During other base visits around the country, when we ask, "Where are you from, when did you first start working with MWDs, and how long have you been at this base," someone invariably volunteers a Lackland story. In upcoming *Kennel Talk* issues, we will share our own Lackland tales and photos, in hopes of providing a more complete picture of the incredible sacrifices made by the men and women who work with these dogs—whether helping a ferocious mama Malinois deliver a litter of puppies; fostering a "teenage" Malinois who dismembers sofas and drywall for fun; enduring bruises and bites while training or providing medical care to the nation's next generation of four-legged heroes; or serving in front of the front line during battle.



Story by Leigh Steere

MWDTSA visits the Military Working Dog Teams National Monument, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, July 24, 2017. L to R: Elaine Byrne (Austin, TX), Leigh and Anna Steere (Boulder, CO), Krista Hernandez (San Antonio, TX), Nikki Rohrig (Charleston, WV), and Robert Schnell (New York, NY). (Photo by TSgt Lewis)

MWDTSA would like to offer special thanks to the following people for making this Lackland visit possible:

Commander of the 341st Training Squadron:
MAJ David Temple

802nd SFS Kennel Master:
TSgt Nicholas Lewis

Holland Animal Hospital:
MAJ Katherine Burlison

Security Forces Museum: Ken Neal, USAF Ret.,
Security Forces Museum Docent

341st Training Squadron/MWD Breeding Program:
Tracy Cann, Foster Consultant

Dog handlers return from deployment

Two military working dog handlers of the 67th Military Police Detachment (Military Working Dog), Special Troops Battalion, returned to Fort Leavenworth last week after serving nine months in Iraq.

“Staff Sgt. Brian Pate served as kennel master for the International Zone while in Iraq. He managed all dog teams in the area at the time,” said Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Roberts, detachment sergeant, 500th Military Police Detachment. “Staff Sgt. Luis Berber and Military Working Dog Roy served as a Patrol Explosive Detector Dog - Enhanced and served as force protections at an installation within the Iraqi theater.”

Roberts said the 67th MP Detachment (MWD)’s mission is to provide trained and certified teams ready to deploy in support of military operations around the world at a moment’s notice.

“More specifically, this mission was to provide explosive dog and kennel master support of force protection for Operation Inherent Resolve,” Roberts said. “Both handlers deployed in November 2016, and their military occupational specialty is 31K, Military Working Dog Handler. The two soldiers served in different locations.”

Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Thompson, kennel master for the 67th, said Pate was selected to fill a position typically designated for soldiers in the grade of E-7. He said the soldier first ordered to deploy in that kennel master position was unable to go forward.

“We knew (Pate) could do the job because he has what it takes,” Thompson said.

Pate, who has deployed four times, said serving as kennel master involved working with 10 teams of military working dogs and handlers. He said all dogs are afforded four weeks of acclimation and training when deployed to an operational theater or new assignment before use on any missions.

“We all arrived in Kuwait at the same time and started acclimating our K-9 immediately,” Pate said. “We began the acclimation process by taking them out for short periods to get used to the heat. (Military Working Dog Roy) was coming from Kansas fall weather temperatures into 100-degree heat.”

Reprinted with permission of The Fort Leavenworth Lamp
Story by Christopher Burnett



Above: Staff Sgt. Brian Pate, of the 67th Military Police Detachment (Military Working Dog), Special Troops Battalion, Fort Leavenworth, Kan., holds his 4-year-old daughter Emma and makes a face for his 1-year-old son Wyatt, held by his wife Jessica, as he is greeted by his family July 25 at Kansas City International Airport. Pate was deployed as a kennel master in Iraq on a force protection mission. Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp



Above: Staff Sgt. Brian Pate, 67th Military Police Detachment (Military Working Dog), Special Troops Battalion, Fort Leavenworth, Kan., carries his 4-year-old daughter Emma, asking her what she wants to do now that he is home (have a party) as he walks to baggage claim July 25 at Kansas City International Airport. Pate was deployed as a kennel master in Iraq since last fall. Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp

Pates’ wife, Jessica, said her husband has deployed

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three times during their marriage. They have a 4-year-old daughter and a 1-year-old son.

"It is great to have him home after nine months away," Jessica said. "Our son was a very young baby when he left, and now he is an older, active young boy." Jessica said her primary support came from the wife of the other deployed soldier, Rosa Berber. She said the two had children near the same ages and other things in common.

"You need a support system within the community," Jessica said. "Rosa was a good friend during the deployment, and we kept each other company." Pate said it feels great to be home and reunited with his family. He said his family has several things planned during his leave period.

"I think we are going to do lots of fishing," Pate said. "Our daughter likes to go to a fishing place in Atchison, Kan., so, we will likely visit it frequently."

Berber said K-9 teams are required to demonstrate proficiency on any unique explosives to that area when deployed. He said they must also demonstrate search capabilities in the new environment before completing the acclimatization and training period.

"The acclimation period continued when we arrived at our assignment to Ayn al-Asad Airbase. Our first mission tasks included becoming familiar with that area and our job description," Berber said. "When done with the processing, our duties included walking patrols, serving as a deterrent by showing a K-9 presence and posting at gates."

Berber said getting back after the deployment was still surreal in some ways. However, he said it feels good to be home with his wife Rosa and their 6-year-old son.

"We are going on vacation to Costa Rica," Berber said. "We will have lots of fun and see the sights."



Above: Rosa Berber shows her husband, Staff Sgt. Luis Berber, of the 67th Military Police Detachment (Military Working Dog), Special Troops Battalion, Fort Leavenworth, Kan., some of the messages and stickers added to a welcome-home sign by their son, 6-year-old Adrian, July 31 at Kansas City International Airport. Berber and MWD Roy were deployed on a force protection mission to Iraq. Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp



Above: Sgt. Kyle Kloeckl, 67th Military Police Detachment (Military Working Dog), Special Troops Battalion, Fort Leavenworth, Kan., holds the door as Staff Sgt. Luis Berber, 67th MP Detachment (MWD), STB, loads MWD Roy into the vehicle upon arriving at Kansas City International Airport July 31. Berber and Roy were deployed on a force protection mission in Iraq. Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp

Take the Next 5K Steps in Tippecanoe

Story by Lisa Eiser

September 23, 2017 is the date for the Second Annual Tails on Trails 5k Dog Walk held in Tippecanoe, Indiana. This event encourages local people to bring their four-legged fur babies out to support Military Working Dog Team Support Association and walk a 5k trail in the beautiful Pottawatomie Wildlife Park. Last year, our event raised \$1,895 for MWDTSA and we hope to match that amount this year.



Volunteer Lisa Eiser invites everyone to come on out to the Tails on Trails 5K Fundraiser on September 23rd to have a great day and raise funds for MWDTSA's care packages. Lisa and her cadre of young Indiana volunteers will be doing this fundraiser to help bank monies for her 2nd Quarter 2018 Care Packages.

Events include a Police K-9 drug dog demonstration, information on having your dog be a blood donor, Michiana Therapy Dog Demo, and Therapy Dog testing, as well as a Canine Good Citizen testing. For those who want to get a start on those Halloween Costumes, we will have two costume contests again, one for Dogs and one for Dog and Owner.

All funds raised go directly to MWDTSA. We are enlisting the help of our local Kohl's store, which through their Kohl's Cares program will donate \$500 to MWDTSA. This year we are asking local groups to "sponsor a box" for \$150, which is the approximate cost of items and shipping for each deployment box we send.

As an added attraction, our local Boy Scout Troop will hold a "Flag Retirement Ceremony" and we will begin promoting this event soon.

For more info and updates on this event, please keep watching our Facebook page, Tails on Trails 5k Dog Walk.

<https://www.facebook.com/TailsonTrails5k/>

Paw patrol: A Brock from the norm

Story and photos by Karen Abeyasekera

On a recent assignment to Germany, Military Working Dog Brock was part of the security detail for the president of the United States' visit to the G20 Summit in Hamburg, where he worked hand-in-hand – or rather, paw-in-paw – with the Secret Service dog teams.

Accompanied by Staff Sgt. Dominick Young, 100th Security Forces Squadron MWD handler, Brock – a dual-certified, odor protection and patrol training dog – searched rooms, luggage, vehicles and aircraft equipment that went on or near Air Force One.

Back here at his home station, the K-9 certainly stands out from the crowd of German Shepherds and Belgian Malinois working dogs – 4-year-old Brock is a 98-pound black Giant Schnauzer, and causes people to do a double-take wherever he goes.

"A lot of people ask, 'What is that?' or 'Is he your pet?' and want to pet him," Young said, laughing.

Giant Schnauzers were used by the Air Force as military working dogs in World War II, but weren't used again until the early 1980s. While they were found unsuitable for military duty in the past, the Air Force decided to try one more time. Military working dogs are officially deemed as one rank higher than their handlers, explained Staff Sgt. Kelly Webster, 100th SFS MWD kennel master.



Above: Military Working Dog Brock, 100th Security Forces Squadron, shows off his uniform after a training session July 11, 2017, on RAF Mildenhall, England. Brock is unique as the only Giant Schnauzer in the Department of Defense. Looking different from the regular German Shepherd and Belgian Malinois working dogs means people often think he is a pet.

"Although it's an unwritten rule, I think it's because the dog is the asset and although we're a team, the dog does the majority of the work, therefore he or she is the real boss," Webster said.

"The dogs are taught like brand new Airmen – they learn and are taught basic odor detection and room searching, all the way down to bite, holding and obedience – it's not an easy task to teach a dog these crucial tasks, and many dogs don't make the cut to being a military working dog."

Brock is the first and only Giant Schnauzer in the Department of Defense in almost 30 years. Young said his K-9 teammate passed his behavioral tests with flying colors, so those in charge of choosing service dogs for the DoD decided to go ahead and purchase him.

All Department of Defense military working dogs are trained at the 341st Training Squadron, Joint-Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, and while there, Brock gained the reputation of being the hardest dog to train. Although originally earmarked for the Transportation Security Administration, they couldn't take him because he bites. While unsuitable for them as they only use sniffer dogs, Brock was a good fit for the Air Force because of the requirements needed for patrol-training dogs.



Left: Military Working Dog Brock looks through a concrete pipe as he prepares to run through it during an obedience training session July 11, 2017, on RAF Mildenhall, England.

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Young admitted that when he first became Brock's handler, the dog was very strong-willed and wouldn't react to his commands. After talking with the K-9 trainers in Texas and following their advice, Young and Brock soon became a strong team and a force to be reckoned with, though it took a lot of hard work and patience.

"Things that worked for the other dogs wouldn't work for Brock – he does things a lot differently. He's great now, but I spent a lot of my off days working with him to gain his respect, and received a lot of help from the kennel master and other handlers," Young said. "When I first got him, he was really dependent on his handler so if he missed anything during training, it would be on me. I would try to give him the independence to find the odor on his own, but he didn't know, so I had to steer him into it. He has a lot of personality and is goofy, playful and very loyal. He's also much easier to work with now. We've been together for a while and have a bond that I don't have with any other dog here," he said.

Webster explained that depending on how well the dog and handler mesh, it takes anywhere from 45 to 90 days to get a team fully certified.

"As the kennel master, I need to know how all my teams work and what their strongest and weakest points are so we can build them to make them solid," he said. "Once I feel the team is capable to work the road and detect substances, I'll initiate a validation test, and after the team passes that phase, we then do their certifications."

Webster added that during his time as the trainer and kennel master, Brock has been relatively easy to train.

"A large part of that is because Sergeant Young has been his handler for two years and they've built the bond which all handlers hope to build with their dog. When we first received Brock, we initially noticed how uncoordinated he was – it was definitely a humorous sight to see a massive puppy of his size doing the work we are required to do! Brock was like a bull in a china shop – now he's one of our best noses and MWDs," Webster recalled.

He explained how the issue is a common one when a new handler is assigned to a dog.

"They're just like humans and they want to feel you out and really test your patience and abilities," he said. "A lot of the rapport to become a good team is built upon trust, and the



Above: U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Dominick Young, 100th Security Forces Squadron Military Working Dog handler, and MWD Brock, a Giant Schnauzer, perform odor detection training. This breed of dog was used in World War II, then not again until the early 1980s. He is the first one to be brought into the DOD since that time.

handler is responsible for that. They play a lot of fetch, as well as go on walks and spend time just playing with them as a dog. We ask a lot from these dogs, so we need to take a step back sometimes and let them be a dog. Rapport comes with detection because it's ultimately a game – if you can have fun with your dog at the same time, it builds a better bond."

The giant dog and his handler work so well together they were given the opportunity of working the presidential detail in Germany.

"Brock was great out there, but the environment affected him at first – he didn't want to eat and you could tell he didn't know where he was," the handler said. "After a couple of days he got used to it and was back to his normal self again."

"One of the best things about that mission was working with the Secret Service dog teams," Young said. "They had a lot more experience than I did, so there was a lot of knowledge being thrown back and forth. Dogs are weird when it comes to new environments so when Brock wasn't eating at first, I talked to the Secret Service guys and they gave me a few pointers on what to do to help him. I was honored to be part of that mission and couldn't believe I was there with Brock, standing right next to Air Force One."

Right: Military Working Dog Brock practices odor detection. Military working dogs are considered one rank higher than their handler.



Book Review: Warrior Pups

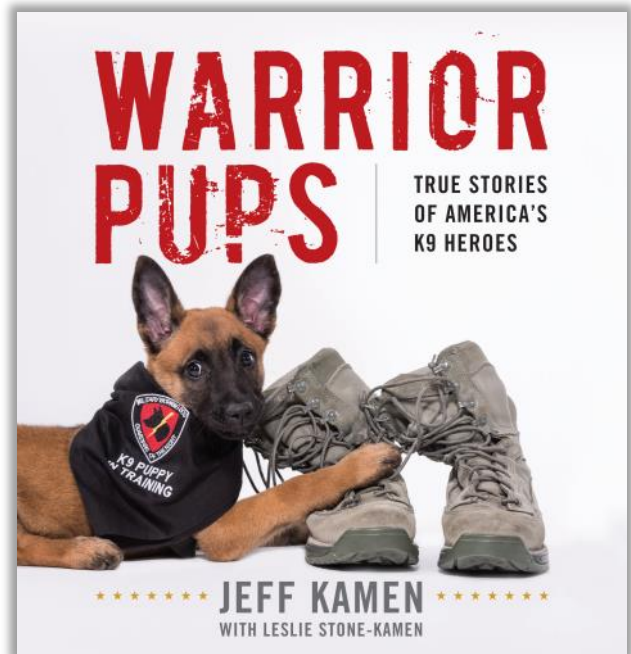
By Tracy Wildenhaus

Fostering an animal is one of the hardest and most generous things a human can do, especially knowing that one day this animal will have to leave. This book allows you to understand the importance of the foster program and how impactful these amazing animals are to the safety of our troops.

The amount of training and care provided is well described throughout the book. The photographs bring the words to life.

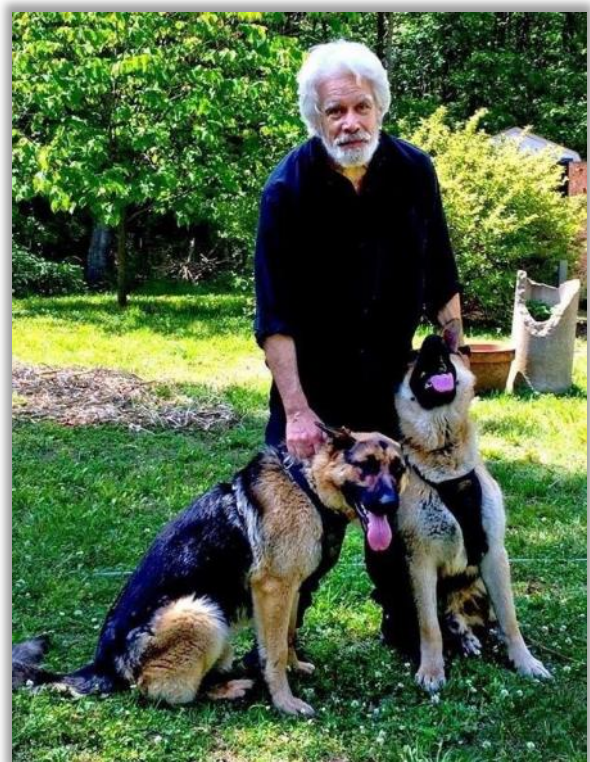
If you have ever wondered what goes on behind the doors at Lackland and this MWD program, I highly suggest giving this a read. This book gives very good insight into Lackland and the MWD program—from birth to foster to deployment and even failure, and sometimes with that happy ending of retirement for a job well done, a chance to reunite with the family or person who gave them their chance to serve and protect.

I now wish I lived closer to Lackland so I could be part of this foster program. Maybe one day...



Above: The book cover

Below: The author, Jeff Kamen, with some friends



KONGs for K9s: Where to get your September fix

Store	Location	Toy	Month
Beach City Dogs 760-717-1101	Oceanside, California	KONG Extreme Ball	September
BlackPaw 303-554-9343	Louisville, Colorado	KONG Extreme Ball	September
Chuck & Don's 720-354-4940	Longmont, Colorado	KONG Extreme Ball	September
Edwards Air Force Base	California	KONG Extreme Ball & Squeeze Stick	September
McGuckin Hardware 303-443-1822	Boulder, Colorado	KONG Extreme Ball	September
PetSmart 303-449-0201	Boulder, Colorado	KONG Extreme Ball	September
PetSmart 303-543-6060	Superior, Colorado	KONG Extreme Ball	September
PetSmart 303-466-2834	Westminster, Colorado	KONG Extreme Ball	September
Veteran's United Craft Brewery 904-253-3326	Jacksonville, Florida	KONG Extreme Ball	September

Thanks to our great donors

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

Abbvie	
Allergan	Parsippany, New Jersey
Norma Bartolini	
Rocky and Brook Blevins	
Stanton Bost	
Customers of Chuck and Don's Pet Food and Supplies	Longmont, Colorado
Dairy Queen	Wentzville, Missouri
Elyktra Eisman	

Gaspari	Norcross, Georgia
Pamela Kendrick	
Susan Lester	
Jean Lindsey	
Francis Murch	
Lynda Ockuly	
Patriot Pet Products	Port Orange, Florida
Nikki Rohrig	
Robert Schnell	
Richard Snyder	
Eileen Thomas	
Christa Ursini	
Pamela Wadsworth	
Jerry and Dixie Whitman	

Orthodontic Patients Donate Wooden Nickels To MWDTSA

By Leigh Steere

Sometimes, donor support comes from unexpected sources. This month, MWDTSA is pleased to report on a creative endeavor taking place in Louisville, Colorado, where patients at Align Orthodontics have banded together to provide funding for our upcoming Q1 2018 care packages.

For years, Align has offered a wooden nickel program to promote good oral hygiene and compliance with orthodontic instructions such as wearing rubber bands, a head gear, or a retainer. At each visit, patients earn nickels, based on how well they've cared for their teeth and braces. Upon earning 20 nickels, patients can "shop" at an Align "store" that offers stuffed animals, Lego sets, gift cards, and other coveted merchandise.

In early summer, Align introduced a new option to deposit wooden nickels in a glass jar at the front desk as a donation to MWDTSA. For every wooden nickel contributed by patients, Align Orthodontics will provide 50 cents toward our Q1 2018 care packages. The kids have donated over 600 wooden nickels so far, and the campaign will run through the end of 2017!

Align Orthodontics has a deep reverence for the military and the sacrifices made by our servicemen and women. Dr. Laurence Colletti, owner of the practice, graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1975. As a USAFA cadet, he was interested in dentistry AND being a pilot. Since the Air Force was not sending any graduates to dental school, he had to decide between staying in the Air Force and becoming a pilot, or pursuing dental school on his own. Taking this decision very seriously, he decided to play himself in a game of racquetball. Becoming a pilot won. During active duty, he flew as a T-38/KC 135 Pilot and Wing Flight Safety Officer and really enjoyed his time in the sky. "Where else in the world," he



Top: Align Orthodontics staff with RMWD Falco. From left to right, bottom row: Dr. Laurence Colletti, moose mascot Justin Timbertooth, Sylvia Cage; top row: Amanda Evans, Megan Lentfer. Not pictured: Laurie Hoff. (Photo by Shelli Patty)

Bottom: Align's wooden nickel jar, along with signs describing the MWDTSA fundraiser. (Photo by Megan Lentfer)



Align Orthodontics continued from page 12

asks, “can a 21-year-old be trusted with a multi-million dollar piece of equipment?”

After 6 years of flying, however, the dental desire returned and he decided to enter the Army Reserves as a Medical and Dental Officer so he could start dental school as a civilian. In this capacity, he was activated for Desert Storm. Altogether, he served in the military for 20.5 years before retiring.

To promote the nickel program, Align Orthodontics recently hosted Retired MWD Falco, Vietnam veteran Randel Patty, and his wife Shelli. The office invited patients to come in to meet Falco and ask questions about MWDs and the work they do. Falco brought a treat bucket to say thank you to MWD TSA supporters. When a young person added wooden nickels to the donation jar, Falco invited them to select an appreciation gift, such as a Denver Broncos homework folder, camo water bottle, nail polish, or orthodontist-approved candy.

Kids ages 4 to 17 were fascinated by Falco’s tattooed left ear, designating his birth year and number. They looked at pictures and videos of MWDs in action, awed that a relatively small dog could knock

down a big man. They seemed surprised that MWDs sleep in kennels instead of dog beds, and they asked a range of questions, such as “How do the dogs know if someone’s a bad guy?” and “Do they eat people?”

This wooden nickel initiative has also allowed patients to learn a bit more about their beloved orthodontist and his occasional mischief. As a young lieutenant, Dr. Colletti went to a friend’s wedding in Montana. They were all housed in an Army Reserve Facility, which was probably a mistake, because they “borrowed” a tank and drove it to the wedding reception. This made for great wedding photos!

Dr. Colletti isn’t the only person at Align with military connections. Orthodontic Assistant Sylvia Cage’s daughter served four years and her son-in-law served 20 years in the Air Force. Front Office Associate Megan Lentfer’s sister and brother-in-law are active duty Navy, and her cousin is an active duty Marine.

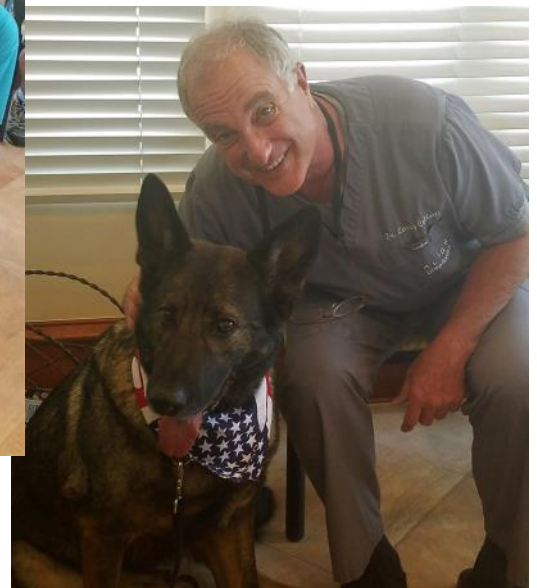
Many thanks to Align Orthodontics for your enthusiastic support. It’s donors like you and your patients who make our quarterly care packages possible, and we really appreciate you!

Below : RMWD Falco with Connor Evans, son of Align Orthodontics staff member Amanda Evans.

Center: Orthodontic client Derek Madtson meets RMWD Falco. (Both photos by Megan Lentfer)



Below: Dr. Colletti with handsome retired MWD Falco at Align Orthodontics.



Military working dog passes, another to retire on Maxwell

Story by Tech. Sgt. Patrick Brown

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala -- What would have been a joint retirement ceremony for two of the 42nd Air Base Wing's military working dogs will now include one retirement and one memorial.

MWD Sam will trade his spot in the 42nd Security Forces Squadron kennel for the home life after serving three years at Maxwell Air Force Base. Staff Sgt. Brandon Bixby, Sam's handler, has adopted the 8-year-old Dutch shepherd. Sam's retirement ceremony, set for Aug. 11, will also include a memorial for a working dog that didn't make it to retirement age.

Elza, a nine-and-a-half-year-old K-9 veteran, died earlier this month after veterinarians discovered cancer in one of her eyes. Elza had served in Iraq, along with several years at Maxwell/Gunter.

"We were about to deploy when we discovered her blindness," said Senior Airman Clinton Gregory, Elza's handler and partner. "We thought she had slight vision loss, but we never thought it would be anything that bad. If we threw a ball, she'd miss it now and again, but it wasn't too out of the ordinary. She was always that goofy, so we just thought she was just acting out," he said.

It was during her pre-deployment examination in May at the Maxwell Veterinary Clinic



MWD Sam was supported by MWDTSA while on a previous deployment with a former handler, Adam Bearden. We met Sam and Elza in person on a 2016 base visit. (Courtesy photo.)

that doctors found vision loss and began to suspect cancer in her left eye. Gregory took Elza to the vet clinic at Auburn University where doctors there decided to remove Elza's left eye. Later, lab results confirmed the cancer diagnosis, but veterinarians there hoped they had removed all traces along with her eye and she was expected to make a full recovery.

Elza was already in the lengthy process of retiring, so she lived the easy life back at the kennel. Gregory's partner spent June recovering, exercising and playing.

In early July, however, it became apparent to Gregory that Elza wasn't recovering as she should. "The last three days she was alive, I was with her. I may have had two hours of sleep," he said.

After a long stint of caring for Elza around the clock at the Maxwell MWD kennel, Gregory

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was relieved and went home. Only a half hour later, he received a call and was notified she was deteriorating quickly. He returned and took Elza back to Ft. Benning, Georgia, where veterinarians confirmed the cancer had spread to Elza's brain. The decision was made there and then to put her down. Gregory called back to the Maxwell kennel to give Kennel Master Staff Sgt. Garrett Watson and fellow handlers Bixby and Staff Sgt. David Wells the news.

"I told them 'Y'all need to get up here quick,'" Gregory said. "... and I stalled (the veterinarians from euthanizing Elza). I stalled as much as I could so they could get there and say their goodbyes."

Bixby, Wells and Watson made it. They and Gregory said their goodbyes, and then Elza was gone.

"It was rough – rough and completely unexpected," Gregory said of the day he lost Elza, visibly holding back emotion. "You don't realize the bond you get with these dogs. Our job is to spend time and bond with these dogs letting them know, 'Hey, I'm your dad,' or 'I'm your mom and I'll take care of you. I'm here for you and you're here for me and we've got each other's back.' She was such a sweetheart, which makes it even harder."

Elza had made her bond with Gregory, and her previous partner, Wells, but was loved throughout the MWD community on Maxwell.



Senior Airman Clinton Gregory, 42nd Security Forces Squadron military working dog handler, bonds during off-duty time with his military working dog Elza at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala. A strong bond between a MWD handler and his dog is crucial because they often must rely on each other in life-or-death situations. Elza succumbed to cancer in early July 2017 months before she was set to retire. (Courtesy photo)

"Seeing not only a partner, but a friend, go down is the hardest pill to swallow," said Otten. "We form a bond and connection with our dogs that couldn't be matched on any other level. Everyone's thought is that there is a small piece of all of us that is now gone."

Gregory was looking forward to adopting Elza, but instead he'll be bringing home half the cremated remains of his partner, while Wells, who is currently deployed, will receive the other half. What they do with Elza's ashes is at their discretion. Gregory plans on keeping his.

A MEMORIAL TO MAX F466

Story and photos courtesy of Gloria Greenidge



My K9 career started with the Ft. Benning Kennel Master assigning Max to me and sharing these words, "Sgt. This is your new dog. He has already deployed twice. He is hard-headed. I don't think he likes females."

As I walked up to the kennel run, I realized Max was what the other handlers called "a painter." He was spinning, his kennel walls and his coat were covered in poo and he was barking at me. Not nicely, either. It was a rough start.

On July 14, 2017, MWD Max crossed the Rainbow Bridge at the ripe old age of 15 years. Max's life was filled with many devoted years of service to the Army, including Secret Service missions and three deployments in support of Iraqi Freedom. He was loved by his handlers: SFC Stephen Thompson, Mr. Kevin Kennedy and his last devoted handler and adopter, SSG Gloria Greenidge. Max was medically discharged in 2010 and lived a joy-filled retirement.

Their initial meeting was a bit tenuous. At the time, Max was a five-year-old Czech-bred German shepherd dog. He took some time to warm up to Gloria, making her wait several days before she could even take him out of the kennel run. Her initial efforts in bonding with him paid off well. Thanks to Gloria for sharing these photos of Max and her.

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My K9 career started with Max. On my initial approaches, he was spinning and barking at me so I could only feed him and clean his run. On the third day, I touched the kennel door with my hand. Instead of barking, he sniffed me and walked away. I opened the gate and slipped the familiar thick leather collar and leash over his neck. He was indeed hard-headed, pulling every chance he got.

Fresh out of K9 school, the ink on my diploma barely dry, I was being partnered with a consummate veteran with seriously advanced skills. From his viewpoint, being paired with a newbie must have made for long and boring training days. To build our bond, every evening I spent extra time throwing his toys, and taking him on runs. On weekends, we marched around a bite suit set up in the middle of the obedience course. Max stuck to my side. A month and a half later, we certified. We gelled as the team I knew we could be.

Our law enforcement duties at Fort Benning included answering domestic abuse calls which can easily escalate. When I arrived on scene with Max, who was about half my size, these calls were usually quickly resolved. I had no fear when I was with him.

One of the memorable calls we responded to was a "rolling domestic." A female driver was at the wheel with her husband's gun pointed at her head. Her call to 911 spurred a base wide search. I turned our patrol car onto a bridge and she almost hit us. I swerved to avoid going over the bridge and quickly pursued them as they drove off base, sirens blaring. They pulled over and I immediately told the driver and passenger to put their hands up and outside of the car. Max was already barking, the husband exited the vehicle and was compliant and his wife was safe. The Columbus Police Department showed up, as we were now in their jurisdiction, and congratulated us. We were a success!

During my first tour in Iraq, knowing that it was Max's third deployment brought comfort. While down range, Max's demeanor changed to a guarded, savvy veteran who knew the ropes.

Searching vehicles required standing through long days and a blistering hot sun to sniff for explosives at checkpoints. Even with the heat, Max excelled at using his nose. He informed me when he needed a short break and then we were right back at it. We completed clearing searches, such as at General Odierno's quarters and a palace in Baghdad, which President Obama visited on his first trip to Iraq. After our work at Division Headquarters, General

Hammond presented Max, a favorite of the Soldiers, with an award for his work.

During one mission, searching outside-the-wire for weapons caches, Max winced when landing a jump over a waddie or irrigation ditch. He seemed to perk back up as we continued searching, but something was not right; he was slower. Medical tests performed in-country revealed nothing out of place.



Returning to Fort Benning, the veterinarians re-evaluated him and discovered torn ligaments in his right leg and a fractured vertebra. He was sent to Lackland AFB in Texas to undergo three surgeries: one for his back and the others for his leg. I visited him three times during his six-month stay there, not knowing if they were going to keep him as a "training dog" to teach green dog handlers.

One day, the news arrived that he was being returned to Fort Benning for adoption. His retirement days were lived with the enthusiasm of a German shepherd. We played at the dog park, visited the White House, and played in the snow during my time at Fort Drum. He brought light and laughter. Max was, indeed, a good boy. He is missed greatly. Godspeed, Max F466. Thank you for your devotion.

A Tribute to Perry Money: Vietnam Dog Handler, VDHA President & Friend

It was with immense sadness that MWDTSA learned of the death of friend, former Marine dog handler, and President of the Vietnam Dog Handlers' Association (VDHA), Perry Money.

Perry enjoyed time with MWDTSA on base visits to Camp LeJeune and Fort Bragg in his home state of North Carolina. He could always be spotted with his long beard and clad in his favorite overalls and red VDHA baseball cap.

Perry was a leader among leaders. He traveled many miles, with his amazing wife, Josie, to honor dog handlers and further the cause of his fellow Vietnam handlers. We have asked one of those fellow handlers, Bill Cummings, to write the tribute that follows.



Tribute by Bill Cummings,
Photos by Dixie Whitman & Nikki Rohrig

***"Here's health to you and to our Corps
Which we are proud to serve;
In many a strife we've fought for life
And never lost our nerve;
If the Army and the Navy
Ever look on Heaven's scenes;
They will find the streets are guarded
By United States Marines."
-Marine Corps Hymn***

As the Marine Corps hymn states, the streets of Heaven are guarded by United States Marines. On July 23, 2017, USMC Mine & Booby Trap Detection Dog team Perry Money, 68, and his faithful companion Missy (7K37) took a time-honored position at Heaven's gates to welcome all veterans and military dogs that have passed over the Rainbow Bridge.

Perry has been my friend and mentor for many years—Perry was "My Marine" in a community of

airmen. Perry and I shared many hours discussing the past, present, and future of the Vietnam Dog Handlers' Association. As a member and later President of the VDHA, Perry always had time to share with every member. Regardless of the situation, and regardless his personal views, Perry ensured that each member's thoughts and concerns were presented and heard by the entire body of the association.

Perry continually supported dog handlers from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and today's handlers serving in Southwest Asia. No handler ever had to worry when he was there. A firm handshake and an ear to all was always the trademark of Perry. Dedication and loyalty were only a few of the things that Perry represented to all who came in contact with him.

One of my fondest memories with Perry was spent in Ft. Benning, GA in 2005. Following a dedication of the war dog memorial, we attended a screening of "War Dogs" together at the National Infantry

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Museum. The intense film moved me to tears. During the toughest moments, I felt Perry's hand on my shoulder, comforting me. I returned the favor when he choked up, and we sat side-by-side on a cold, marble bench as brothers, just as we had decades before in a faraway jungle.

When loved ones are lost, people always speak of shoes to fill and hearts to mend. Well, this old dog handler can safely say that in the case of Perry Money, they just don't make those shoes anymore;

and there is no balm that can heal the holes in the hearts of those who knew him.

Semper Fi Marine, you did us proud. We got your six.

Sgt. Bill Cummings – USAF
Sentry Dog Handler – 1967-71
635th SFS - U-Tapao Royal Thai Air Base
Sentry Dog Brutus X321

MWDTSA's 4th Quarter care packages will be dedicated in memory of Perry Money. They will reach approximately 200 active duty handlers, sharing the story of Perry's legacy. The boxes are planned with the theme of "We Got Your Six" and will be assembled in his home state of North Carolina and shipped during the month of November.



Above: Perry, a former Marine Mine & Booby Trap Detection Dog Handler with the 1st Platoon in Vietnam, is pictured at the Camp LeJeune kennel during an MWDTSA event. Perry can be spotted by the beard and overalls in the back row, second from the right.



Above, left to right: Three Vietnam-era brothers at Camp LeJeune, NC. Bob Hughes, a Combat Tracker, Perry Money, a Marine dog handler, and Jerry Whitman, MWDTSA volunteer.



Above: On left, Jodi Jackson, a former Army dog handler and MWDTSA volunteer, with her dog, Kylee, chats with Perry after an MWDTSA educational event at the Washington County Public Library in Abingdon, Virginia.

Sit. Stay. Support.

MWD TSA

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

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

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Parting Shot

Ohio

A military working dog team sweeps the exterior of the National Air and Space Intelligence Center during an active shooter exercise at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Aug. 2, 2017. The exercise was held as part of the requirement set for military installations to hold active shooter exercises twice a year. (U.S. Air Force photo by Wesley Farnsworth/Released)

