

March 2014
Award Winning
Monthly Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue 3

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Inside this issue:

All Bark, All Bite	1
Chris K081 and Richard Trapp	3
Super Bowl Fever	4
Caribou Coffee Supports	6
Why Do you Volunteer with MWDTSA?	6
Kongs for K9s	7
From the Archives	8

What skills can you share to support our dog teams? We are looking for volunteers in:

- Fundraising
- Grant writing
- Giving presentations
- Soliciting in kind - donations
- Newsletter editing
- Social networking

Contact us for more info:
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Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

MWDTSA KENNEL TALK



Cpl. Paul Kelley, military working dog handler, Combat Center's Provost Marshal's Office, holds on to MWD Collie before setting him on a potential suspect during aggression training near K9 unit kennels, Jan. 22, 2014. Aggression is one of the skills that handlers focus on while training the military working dogs.

All Bark, All Bite

Story and photos Cpl. D. J. Wu

Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif. - Military working dogs are trained to do many things. They can locate drugs and explosive components. They can be a part of search-and-rescue teams and react to save their handler's lives.

Aggressive behavior is encouraged with military working dogs, but it is a very controlled aggression. Some dogs have the aggression built into them when they are born, some need a little more training to gain the confidence to pursue a suspect or go in for the takedown.

"It's all about building confidence," said Staff Sgt. Charles Hardesty, kennel master, Combat Center Provost Marshal's Office. "If the handlers are timid, the dogs are going to sense that and act the same way. We have to build their confidence and then reinforce it with positive feedback."

The aggression in a military working dog can be compared to the use of a ballistic vest for police officers. The likelihood of being shot on duty is relatively low, but it's always good to

All Bark continued page 2

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All Bark continued from page 1

have a tool and not need it, versus the alternative.

"It's a tool that we like to have," Hardesty said. "Aggression and biting are skills we need the dogs to have even if we aren't going to use it."

Training the dogs' aggression is a gradual process. Handlers will work on specific drills and repeat them until the dogs can maintain that good habit.

Handlers and trainers utilize bite sleeves and suits to get the dog in an aggressive mindset. They move more aggressive dogs into advanced training, including vehicle extractions and hidden bite sleeves under civilian clothes.

"We like to take it step by step with aggression," said Daniel Andrzejewski, K9 trainer, Combat Center Provost Marshal's Office. "Training varies from dog to dog. We work them up with different biting wraps. We like to work off wraps too, because we don't want the dogs to become gear dependent."

Controlled aggression is crucial characteristic for K9 handlers to instill in their MWDs. It allows them to be effective in their jobs and safe when those skills are called into action.

Aggression is a true test of the working dog's obedience. Commands for aggressing and stopping need to be obeyed without hesitation. The handler and working dog need to have a strong relationship to be able to be aggressive when the time comes.

K9 training is continual throughout the MWD's career. From the time they get to the kennel as young as two years old until the day they retire, they work on the skills of their trade.



Above: Cpl. Joshua Tavares, military police officer, takes a bite from military working dog Collie during aggression training near K9 unit kennels. The bite suit is a tool that handlers can use to assist aggression training.

Below: Cpl. Paul Kelley, military working dog handler, Combat Center's Provost Marshal's Office, plays with his dog, Collie, at the K9 kennels.



Chris K081 and Richard Trapp

By Dixie Whitman

Chris was a particularly talented gal; she had to be because she was working alongside members of an elite Navy SEAL team whose every movement was precise and inevitable. She was a gorgeous German shepherd dog of deep sable color, perfect ear set with an exquisite structure that matched her beautiful mind. All of those talents and assets were honed by her handler, Richard Trapp, into a Patrol and Explosives Dog extraordinaire, Chris K081.

It was Trapp's second Deployment, but his first as a dog handler. In addition to Chris' skills in the field, the teamwork built with Trapp was flawless in execution and resulted in their being pulled to work highly sensitive and critical missions with members of the Special Forces Group.

One such day happened to be on July 4th. Sure, it was Independence Day back home with parades, family reunions and BBQs, but here in the hot, wretched Hellhole of Afghanistan, the day would be spent on a mission to assist a nearby village deal with their Taliban infestation issues.

The mission that day remains mostly classified so we cannot know the intensity of battle or final results, but ultimately, after a firefight lasting two hours, the team prepared to return back to their tiny Forward Operating Base (FOB) to rest, Mission Complete.

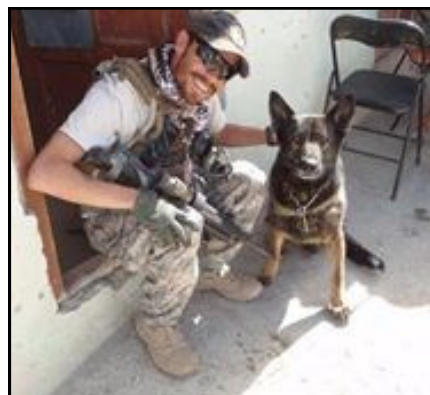
Driving the dangerous road-

ways is always an issue in Afghanistan. Today was no different, except due to the extreme terrain, these guys were riding All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs). The ATV that Chris and Richard rode hit a 60 pound IED that day. As Trapp remembers, "It was a scary event. I didn't know if we were dead or alive." Fortunately, it was their lucky day as only half of the explosive actually detonated, but the heat from the half that did explode burned Trapp's uniform and melted his boots.

"It was nerve-racking, I went back to the FOB, got on the phone, called my wife and I told her, "I just wanted to say I love you."

Chris continues to perform flawlessly. She will do anything for a KONG toy. That deployment with Trapp she had 7 confirmed finds, including two bomb making factories, a weapons cache filled with AK47s and rounds of ammunition along with multiple IEDs. Her work no doubt saved the lives of coalition soldiers and local civilians. As she continues to work, she moves towards her retirement, which Trapp plans to be on a couch in his living room.

We thank this hardworking gal with a great nose for all of her expertise and success over the years and wish her Godspeed on her journey home from her current deployment and into the welcoming arms of her former handler and permanent retirement.

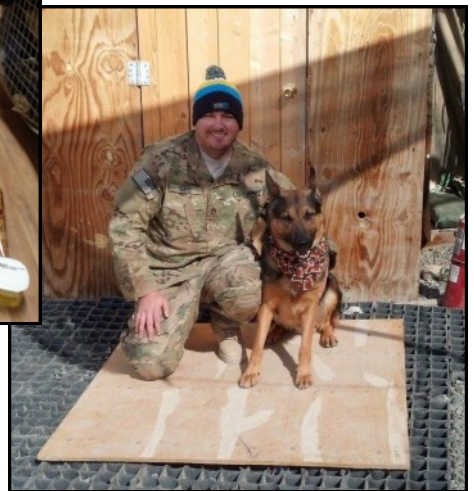


Super Bowl Fever Hits Our Dog Teams

By Dixie Whitman

The results of our Super Bowl boxes are in. Whether our handlers were supporters of the Seattle Seahawks or the Denver Broncos, they were all big fans of their Super Bowl in a Box care packages. MWDTSA owes a huge debt of gratitude to Dick Baumer, Jan Slotar and the most excellent team of care packagers from LaSalle High School and a local 4H Club near Pasadena, California.

Here are some of the fun photos that we received from the very excited dog teams.



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

The Animal Keeper (via Christie Ferris)
Garrett Schmidt
Petco Foundation



Super Bowl continued from page 4



Top Row (L to R): SSgt Ulmstead and MWD Sato in their Super Bowl Gear; SSgt Rosario and MWD Zsander ; SSgt. Jackson and MWD Samo ; SSgt Alpage and MWD Ilay in their Super Bowl finest out playing with the tunnel .

Middle (L to R): SSgt Cruz and MWD Liza; MWD Edy and his Super Bowl hat....well, his handler's hat .

Left: MWD Quick with the awesome NFL Super Bowl Hat .

Above: MWD Chrach and SSgt Emmick. MWD Chrach has been featured on our Facebook page and our newsletter with his former handler. He's already back at it again. Stay safe, Buddy.

Caribou Coffee Supports MWDTSA

By Dixie Whitman



Thanks to manager and dog lover, Jacqui Sands, Caribou Coffee goes "no holds barred" when it comes to supporting our troops. During the store's 4th quarter drive, several boxes of donated coffees were collected. Jacqui drove them to us for the donation and we sent them off to various kennels. The photos of these donations are now making their way back to us and we wanted to share some of them with you.



Right: Thanks sent from a Navy Kennel.

Left: More thanks, this time from an Army kennel.



Why DO You Volunteer with MWDTSA?

By Avril Roy-Smith

I am often asked why I volunteer my time to further the cause of MWDTSA. I am the Vice President of the 501(c)3 organization, as well as the Kennel Talk Editor, a position that takes more time each month than you might think. I thought that I would share some of my reasons with the readers of Kennel Talk.

Corp., part of the British Army. Amongst his many duties was that of caring for the British MWDs. While he was stationed in Germany, he fell in love with the German Rottweilers. At the time, there were no Rottweilers in England. He reintroduced the breed there., later introducing them to Australia.

When I was born, in a British military hospital in Germany, my father was a member of the Royal Veterinary

I spent my childhood with Dad and his dogs – raising, training and showing them.

Right: As a child, I was usually to be found with my favorite accessory—a Rottweiler. This pup was one of 4 Rottweilers then in Queensland, Australia, all of them owned by my father and trained by me.



KONGs for K9s Matched by The KONG Company

By Dixie Whitman

Thanks to all of our partners in our annual KONGs for K9s drive, we have KONGs, at least for the next couple of months.

Our dogs love KONG toys more than just about anything else. For that reason, every year we partner with some stores and invite their customers to donate a KONG that is then later matched by the KONG Company. Due to the diligence and hard work by our partners, we had 330 KONG toys donated to our toy drive. You can imagine the shipment of matching KONGs was large. It was so large, in fact, that the KONG Company asked us for a location where a pallet could be delivered. We are blessed to have a great partner store right down the road and they stepped in to accept all of the goodies.

These toys have already started going out to teams deployed down range and to Military Working Dog Kennels as part of our 2014 Virtual World Tour.

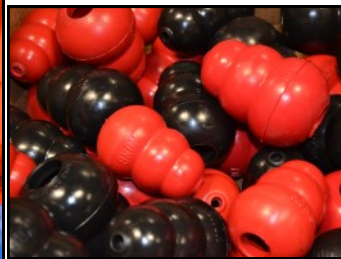


Above: Jerry Whitman, Sabine and Fabio Yepes inspect the delivery.

Far Left: MWD Hatos balances his KONG .

Middle: Some of the colorful Kongs now on their way to deployed MWD teams down range, and to MWD Kennels taking part in our 2014 Virtual World Tour.

Left: Fabio Yepes of T C Country replicating Hatos's balancing feat and disproving the old adage that you can't teach an old dog new tricks.



Volunteering continued from page 6

My son enlisted in the Army Reserve while still in high school, and chose to make his career in the US Army. He is currently deployed in Afghanistan.

With all these parts of my life, I think it might be obvious why I work with MWD TSA, helping to support and honor MWD teams down range and at home.



Left: (L to R) My grandfather, Maj. M. Roy Smith; me; my Dad, Capt. F Roy-Smith, in uniform; my sister; my grandmother.

Maj. M. Roy Smith fought in Mesopotamia during WWI. He was put in for the Victoria Cross, (awarded the Military Cross) when he was 19 and a subaltern (2nd LT. equivalent). Where he was fighting was only a few miles from where my son was stationed during his Iraqi deployment. (Mesopotamia was an area that included Iraq.). He served as a chaplain in WWII.

My father served in the Royal Veterinary Corp., in Germany.



Above: My son. Capt. B. Roy-Smith, currently deployed in Afghanistan.

Military Working Dog Team
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Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, the only working dogs attached to the US Army were about 50 sled dogs at military stations in Alaska. In 1942, the War Dog Program was set up to include the procurement and training of War Dogs and also to establish schools for this purpose, as well as to develop training techniques and to teach the handlers.

This photo below shows obedience training taking place somewhere in Alaska during WWII.

Photo courtesy of the National Archives.

From the Archives

