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September, 2016  
Award Winning  
Monthly Newsletter

Volume 8, Issue 9

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Kennel Talk is an award  
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MWDTSA touches the lives of dogs and people near and far. This month our articles and photos take us from California and Indiana around the world to Germany and Kuwait. We go back in time to South Korea and South Vietnam.

Our archived photo is from Quang Nai Province in Vietnam and Task Force Oregon in 1967.

Subscribe to see where we connect next month!

## Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

### MWDTSA KENNEL TALK



**Rogo, 86th Security Forces Squadron military working dog in training, pulls on a toy July 12, 2016, at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Rogo arrived at Ramstein on June 29 from training and must undergo a 90-day trial period to ensure he has what it takes to be an MWD.**

## 86th SFS Welcomes New MWD

Story and photos by Airman 1st Class Tryphena Mayhugh

"Rogo has a great temperament for a MWD, meaning he can be trained easily," said Staff Sgt. Bernardo Cortes, 86th SFS MWD trainer. "This is what you want because the MWD is able to learn tasks fast without having to stay stuck on what we call the 'teach stage.'"

Before Rogo underwent training at Lackland, he had a few requirements to pass to be selected as a MWD. To start with, he had to fall under specific height and weight measurements and had a full medical examination for diseases and problems with hips and elbows. He was also tested for gun shyness, aggressiveness and basic searching behavior. This is similar to Airmen going through MEPS and BMT to ensure they are physically and mentally capable of being in the military.

Once it was determined Rogo was a good fit for the military, he went to tech school, or at least his version of it. For 156 days, he was taught obedience, aspects of patrol, and explosive detection.

"What the MWDs are taught at Lackland is the bare basics," said Staff Sgt. Lance Oakes, 86th SFS MWD trainer supervisor. "Much like Airmen going through tech school, they are taught the basics of how to perform their job. What we do when they arrive here is hone and sharpen those skills. The MWDs will know the commands, but sometimes they will or will not follow them. We work with them to ensure they obey every time."

There is a 90-day trial period for MWDs to see how they will work in their new home. During this time, Rogo will be tested on multiple scouts, building search, patrol tasks, detection training, obstacle course, basic obedience, and exposure to multiple real world environments.

"The purpose is to expose the MWD to as much as possible to see if they are good candidates to be operational in the field," said Oakes. "If they have discrepancies, they can be sent back to Lackland AFB and another MWD will be sent to replace them."

86th SFS Welcomes MWD continued on page 2

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86th SFS Welcomes MWD continued from page 1



Luckily for Rogo, he seems to be adjusting well and shows promise with his training.

"All of us in the Kaiserslautern Military Community should feel a little safer," said Cortes. "Whether it is at night or during the day, Rogo will be on the job, protecting our freedom and keeping the bad guys in check."

**Top left: Staff Sgt. Bernardo Cortes, military working dog trainer, leads Rogo over a barrier.**

**Left: Staff Sgt. Lance Oakes, military working dog trainer supervisor, holds up a ball for Rogo. Rogo arrived at Ramstein on June 29 straight out of training, and must undergo a 90-day trial period to ensure he has what it takes to be an MWD.**

## Patriotic Pupster



MWD TSA was the lucky recipient of the largest number of votes in a recent online voting contest for the most patriotic pup. A huge thank you to all of our supporters who helped us win this contest and, most especially, to the lovely lady Aura, shown at left in the winning photo. We plan to share her stunning story later this year.

The winning photo is worth a \$1000 grant to MWD TSA by the organizing company, Patriot 5 Star.

Even better, MWD TSA will be entered into a contest competing against all of the other monthly winners. There will be \$100,000 on the line for that contest so get your voting fingers ready.

We could do so many good things with \$100,000 in terms of supporting dogs, handlers, events, and more.

Watch for more information on this voting contest via both our newsletter and social media.

Our heartfelt thanks to all of you for your continued and devoted support.

# Fur Missile Friday at Naval Base Ventura County

Story and Photos by Jan Slotar

I spent some quality time visiting with the handlers and dogs at Naval Base Ventura County on Friday, July 15. The base is located in Port Hueneme California's southern coast. I arrived armed with a Go Pro camera and dog harness, my digital camera, KONGs for the dogs, and snacks for the handlers. We had a blast with the Go Pro, and decoy MA2 Marrote had a great time breaking in a brand new bite suit with four dogs: MWD Attila, MWD Alexa, MWD Dallas, and MWD JoJo.

Thanks to MA1 Collesano, MA2 Chandler, MA3 Harris, OFC Torrez, and MA2 Marrote for a really fun day!!!



**Above: MWD Attila wasn't really sure about the Go Pro harness, but he forgot about it when he saw the bite suit, and then was totally focused on getting the "bad guy."**

**Below left and right: MA1 Collesano, MWD Attila, and decoy MA2 Marrote.**



**Above left and above right: MA3 Harris, MWD Alexa, and decoy MA2 Marrote.**

**Left: MWD Alexa did not want to let go of the "bad guy." Good job, Alexa.**



Fur Missile Friday continued from page 3



**Left Top center and below: MWD Dallas with MA2 Chandler. The decoy was MA2 Marrote.**



**Above and right: MWD JoJo, OFC Torrez, decoy MA2 Marrote. MWD JoJo really doesn't want to let go - good job!!!**



## Rescued Scottish Terrier Serves as Soldier's Mascot

Story and photos by Spc. Angela Lorden

The phone rang. A woman, Grace MacGregor, answered.

"Grace, I have your dog."

The phone call was from her friend, who was also a coordinator for a rescue organization in the United States. The rescue had shut down a puppy mill in 2010. Among the dogs rescued was a small, black Scottish terrier. He lived in a cage at the unlicensed-breeding facility for five years.

According to the dog's American Kennel Club paperwork, his registered name was MacGregor.

"We found it to be an omen," Grace said. "A MacGregor dog, five years old then, and MacGregor me. He became MacGregor MacGregor."

The small dog then traveled to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait to live out a larger purpose.

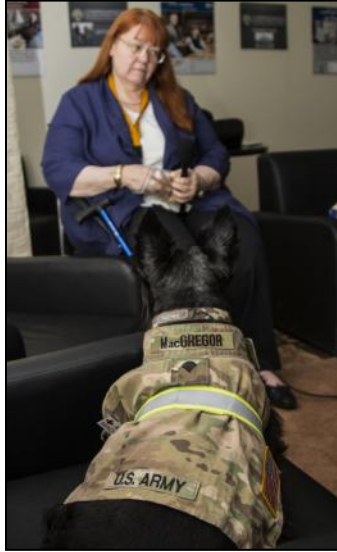
MacGregor MacGregor the Scottish terrier and Grace MacGregor, the dog's handler, volunteer at the Resiliency Center and the Combat Support Hospital to promote the welfare and resiliency of Service members and civilians stationed at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

"I think MacGregor is another way for the military to care for people," Grace said. "The more people can relax and the more their life while deployed is normalized, the more they are likely to perform at their best," Grace said.

MacGregor's transition from a rescue dog to a volunteer animal began with Grace's participation in a club at Camp Arifjan.

"I was coming out here for Toastmasters," she said. "I was talking to the Red Cross staff and I mentioned I had a dog. They said, 'Oh, we need one out here so badly.' You can't really have dog living here. People began encouraging me to try and work my way through the paperwork. So I did."

New memorandums of understanding and exceptions to policy had to be written in order for MacGregor to become a Human-animal Bond dog. He then had to pass a temperament test by the Army.



**Above: MacGregor MacGregor, a Scottish Terrier Human-Animal Bond dog and Red Cross volunteer, waits patiently for a treat from his owner, Grace MacGregor, July 8, 2016.**

"The Army does excellent temperament tests for any animals that are going to be in contact with Soldiers," she said. "When he passed, we were able to get the rest of the paperwork wrapped up. A lot of people were involved."

MacGregor became part of the Army's Human-Animal Bond Program. The program, sponsored by the American Red Cross, facilitates animal companionship for Servicemembers, patients, families and visitors. MacGregor also serves as a resiliency mascot for Soldiers.

Master Sgt. Marvin Curtis, the Resiliency Center director and Master Resiliency Training program coordinator with the 1st Theater Sustainment Command, said he asked the Red Cross for permission to have MacGregor be the mascot for the Resiliency Team after seeing, first hand, how important the docile dog was to Service members.

"The interesting part was how soothing he is to people," Curtis said. "That goes from privates I saw to O-6's... There's a lot of people, whether they're in the fight or in the rear areas that go through a lot and need support. That's what we try to offer at the resiliency center with the Red Cross."

Grace and MacGregor began providing Soldiers and civilians the opportunity to interact with the furry companion on a weekly basis.

"Early in his life he was not a loved dog," Grace said. "Now he's a loved-by-everybody dog."

Sgt. 1st Class Melissa Kass, a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) specialist with the 126th Military Police Company visited MacGregor for the first time July 1.

"Besides being proven statistically, I think there's something really comforting for Soldiers when they get to pet a dog," Kass said. "There's something about the unconditional love of a dog that eases the soul. All the stresses that go with a deployment, everything melts away. The dog doesn't judge me for anything."

They also began visiting patients and staff at the hospital here.

"With the patient's permission, we put him up on the bed and he just snuggles down so they can scratch him, cuddle him and talk to him," Grace said. "So many people have said when we leave, 'Thank you. I really needed this today.' It does make a difference."

Her husband, William Ostertag, was part of her inspiration to make a difference in Soldier's lives, she said. He passed away in 1999. He rests at the Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia.

"Sometimes I get a little misty about it," she said. "My husband was an Army Colonel. He served his country for 28 years. He was very much a commander who looked after his troops. It was one of the things I loved about him. I feel like I'm still carrying on part of his legacy."

Soldiers at Camp Arifjan are still part of her family, she said.

"When I look around at these Soldiers, I see the best of America," said Grace. "I see the Army values internalized in the Soldiers. I can come out here and I am unflinchingly treated with courtesy and respect."

Scottish Terrier Serves continued on page 6

Scottish Terrier Serves continued from page 5

**First row left: MacGregor MacGregor, a Scottish terrier Human-Animal Bond dog and Red Cross volunteer, poses for the camera July 1.**

**First row right: Sgt. 1st Class Melissa Kass, a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) specialist with the 126th Military Police Company holds MacGregor MacGregor. MacGregor volunteers at the Resiliency Center and the Combat Support Hospital to promote the welfare and resiliency of Servicemembers and civilians at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.**

**Bottom center: MacGregor MacGregor, a Scottish terrier Human-Animal Bond dog and Red Cross volunteer, takes a nap July 1.**



## Ice, Ice Baby Care Packages

Story by D. G. Whitman

MWD TSA is excited to announce the theme of our 4th quarter care package: **Ice, Ice Baby.**

Because the boxes will be sent out in November and will encompass the start of winter, we will be featuring a theme that highlights the great sport of winter: hockey. But, hockey isn't the only thing going on in the winter time. Children also build ice castles and snowmen. Many folks enjoy the holidays while warming their toes before a crackling fire. For many reasons, this box will be a great treat from home to let the handlers know that America "has their six."

We are looking to our great supporters to help us fill these boxes to the brim with items that are fun, familiar, and functional: items that both the handlers and the dogs can enjoy and use.

In the fun category, we have playing cards and T-shirts for the handlers and brand new reward toys for the dogs. Our familiar items bring a touch of home to far-flung locations, items such as our "Fiesta in a Box," which will feature touches from various 4th quarter holidays. And the functional is never far from our mind with items like collapsible water bowls, paw protector, and sanitizing wipes. Of course, we will always have some great surprises in store.

These boxes are being finalized right now and we look for many ways in which our supporters can help to provide some of our needed supplies. Two ways you can support this box are to either select an item from our Amazon Wish List or to send a monetary donation.

For PC/Mac: [Amazon Wish List](#)

For Mobile Devices: [Amazon Wish List](#)

Amazon Wish List donations should be finalized by the 17th of October to allow us time to fill in any gaps in coverage. We are planning on packing, shipping, and supporting the needs of 175 dog teams who are working in harm's way this 4th quarter. Won't you join with us to send your support?



**Please join us to send important supplies to our dog teams. Jerky for the dog handler and Paw Protector are included in our Amazon Wish List.**

Artwork by Michelle Mruk

## “Tippecanoe and Trail Dogs, Too”



Military Working Dog Team Support Association (MWD TSA) is hosting a Tails on Trails 5K and activities for dog lovers and their dogs on **September 24, 2016 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Potawatomi Wildlife Park in Tippecanoe IN.** The purpose of the event is to raise awareness and dollars for MWD TSA.

Our special event appeals to veterans, pet lovers, and families from Kosciusko, Marshall, Fulton, St. Joseph and Elkhart Counties.

For more information, you can contact us through email [tailsontails5k@gmail.com](mailto:tailsontails5k@gmail.com) or on our Facebook page “Tails on Trails 5k Dog Walk.”

Funds raised from this event will be used in MWD TSA’s many missions, including 4th quarter care packages and base visits.

We appreciate your kind support on behalf of our deployed military working dog teams.

## 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:**

Animal Hospital of Thousand Oaks  
and their clients  
Thousand Oaks, California

Stanton Bost  
Patricia A Carter  
Mandy Espinoza  
Elizabeth Greenberg  
Krista Hernandez  
Rebekah Lynch  
Janice Maclin  
Matthew Marcon  
Kelly Messimer

In memory of a beloved dog  
Friend, Ollie Pugh

Kerri Moss  
Michelle Mruk  
Francis Murch  
Laurie Newton  
Michelle O'Brien  
Stephen Redden  
Rita Richardson  
Patricia Roberts  
Adam and Nikki Rohrig  
San Francisco Bay Gourmet Coffee  
Lincoln, California  
Lesley Scheblein  
Amanda Tomlinson  
Christa Ursini  
Katie Welch  
Kathie Woodring



## Support Our KONGs for K9s Drive



MWD TSA is excited to announce our 2016 KONGs for K9s toy drive with the largest number of supporting stores ever assembled. We anticipate having more stores join us throughout our traditional “KONG season.”

Currently, we have ten stores from Alabama, California, Florida, Utah, and West Virginia who will support our drive with a donation box at their location. Each of the stores selects the month or months in which they wish to participate and a toy from our Wish List.

Supporters can stop by to donate a toy for a military working dog and the KONG Company will match it with another toy.

If you would like to participate and do not have a store near you, many of our participating stores would welcome orders from you via credit card.

At the end of the drive, we gather all of the donated KONGs, inventory them, and report our totals to the KONG Company.

These KONGs will go into care packages planned for later this year and into next year.

If you’ve ever wished for a way for your donations to go further, here is a way to provide toys for two different dogs for the cost of one toy.

A huge shout out to all supporting stores.

Store	Location	Toy	Month(s)
<b>Sunset Animal Hospital</b> 707.425.4050	Fairfield, California 1239 Western Street	KONG Extreme Ball	August—September
<b>Dunbar Animal Hospital</b> 304.766.6407	Dunbar, West Virginia 1419 Dunbar Avenue	KONG Extreme Flyer	August—October
<b>Brown Veterinary Service</b> 304.272.6200	Wayne, West Virginia 300 McGinnis Drive	KONG Extreme Flyer	August—December
<b>Pet Supplies Plus</b> 205-345-1212	Tuscaloosa, Alabama 2600 McFarland Blvd. E.	KONG Toy TBD	September
<b>Veterans United Brewery</b> 904.253.3326	Jacksonville, Florida 8999 Western Way #104	KONG Extreme Ball	September
<b>Ma and Paws Bakery, Inc.</b> 801.487.3838	Salt Lake City, Utah 1227 East 3300 South	KONG Extreme Flyer	November
<b>The Animal Keeper</b> 760.753.9366	Encinitas, California 155 Saxony Road	KONG Toy TBD	November-December
<b>The Animal Keeper</b> 760-941.3221	Oceanside, California 3532 College Blvd.	KONG Toy TBD	November-December
<b>The Animal Keeper</b> 858-748-9676	Poway, California 12280 Oak Knoll Rd.	KONG Toy TBD	November-December
<b>Pet Suites</b> 949-425-0700	Aliso Viejo, California 19 Journey	KONG Toy TBD	November-December

## Yankee – Take Your Dog And Go Home!

Submitted for your approval is a short narrative of a reconnaissance patrol that involves several characters. The date is May 16, 1952. Nighttime. The place is somewhere in Korea. Leading the American squad of sixteen men is Lt. Peter Jourdonnias. Opposing them, somewhere out in the darkness, are an unknown number of Chinese soldiers. Both participants are drawn together in a brutal war that will bring these combatants together - or perhaps not. For the Americans have a *weapon* the Chinese do not possess - a scout dog named Arlo. And alongside this so-called weapon is his handler, Sgt. Jack North. Each side will be separated by just a few hundred yards in a deadly cat and mouse game between two opposing forces. Ultimately, what takes place during this encounter will not be decided by the men involved, but with a six year-old German shepherd dog, that has just one purpose in mind - one that he was trained to do - to protect the men that follow him.

The plan was simple: the American infantrymen would leave their post at the MLR (main line of resistance) during the night and reconnoiter a road which might be used as a tank route north toward enemy held territory. The patrol is to check three bridges to see if they could support tanks. Jourdonnias was instructed not to engage the enemy unless absolutely necessary. The men carried two BARs, and sixteen M2 carbines. Each man carried 400 rounds of 30-caliber ammunition and two fragmentation grenades.

The patrol did not have Sgt. North or Arlo on the point when they first started out as the wind was on their backs. For the scout dog team to be effective they needed the wind on their nose. After scouting the three bridges, North and Arlo were placed on the point. In his own words, North later related in an after-action interview report: "After walking about twenty five yards Arlo gave me a very strong scent alert. I signaled for the group to drop to the ground and motioned for Lt. Jourdonnias to come forward. I told him that Arlo had given a very strong scent alert and that someone was immediately ahead but did not know how far. He [Jourdonnias] deployed fourteen men on the right side of the road and two on the left. I remained on the road with Arlo.

Lt. Jourdonnias stated that the patrol was to remain in position until daylight. After

**Right: Joe "Heavy" Thompson returns from a patrol with his scout dog. Note the M2 carbine and MK2 grenades. Photo: Robert Fickbohm**



about 30 minutes, Arlo, his ears pointed straight up, appeared to sense some movement to his left. His head seem to move as if he detected some noises. No one in the patrol was able to hear a sound. About fifteen minutes later, a noise rang out to the left [in] front of us. Voices could then be heard.

At this point Lt. Jourdonnias decided to move up the road to see if the enemy could be detected. We moved about a 100 yards without further alert from the dog. The group returned to the MLR without incident, arriving about 0100. It is the alertness of the dog that saved the reconnaissance patrol from certain ambush." Did Arlo save the platoon? It is really not known what would have happened to the patrol had there not been a scout dog along. One aspect of using dogs in warfare is just how many lives may have been saved by not engaging the enemy when an early silent alert is given of their position. There is no true way to measure that. For North and for that matter Arlo, the results speak for themselves - everyone came back in one piece.

This was just one patrol, which went with-

out incident during one night, by handlers of 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Scout Dog Platoon (ISDP). But it would be played out time and time again. The only scout dog team involved during the Korean War was the 26<sup>th</sup> ISDP. Yet this platoon made more than 1500 combat patrols during the course of the war and just about everyone was conducted at night.

After WWII, with the military dog program gutted, just the 26<sup>th</sup> ISDP remained active. Their mission at that time was to show the American public the capabilities of the military working dog in demonstrations around the country. The 26<sup>th</sup> ISDP landed in Korea in July 1950, piecemeal, with just seven handlers and dogs. The others were soon to follow. Their missions were simple yet dangerous: have the scout dog provide a silent alert of the enemy during patrols, observation posts, and outposts forward of the allied battle position. Their effectiveness was well documented. In a review of after-action reports, patrols led by scout dogs teams were credited with reducing causality rates by 65%. One scout dog in particular was noted for

Yankee –Take Your Dog continued on page 11

Yankee –Take Your Dog continued from page 10



**Left: A scout dog team during daytime operation in Korea in 1953. Photo: Courtesy of NARA**



**Above: James Partain and York after receiving citation. Photo: Courtesy of NARA**



**Right: On his 39th patrol Champ stepped on a mine, something he was not trained to detect. He died instantly and his handler was severely wounded. Photo: Robert Fickbohm**

his service. An eight year-old German shepherd named York (011X) was presented an "Award for Distinguished Service." York led 148 combat patrols and never lost a man. He eventually returned to Fort Benning and was interred with honors at the age of twelve.

As good as they were, patrols led by scout teams suffered. Scout dog Champ was on his 39<sup>th</sup> patrol when he stepped on a mine. Champ was killed instantly and his handler wounded severely. Scout dogs operating in Korea were not trained to alert to mines or booby-traps. So how does one account for the actions of scout dog Happy?

While on a nighttime patrol and working point, handler Alvin Steenick noticed his scout dog Happy stop in his tracks and freeze. It was not the type of alert that Steenick had seen before. He pushed the dog ahead but Happy refused to move.

Steenick told the platoon leader that there was an unknown danger ahead. With the platoon leader pissed that there was no forward progress, he stepped ahead of the stalled war dog. And a second later there was an immediate explosion. It was a gre-

nade booby trap. The platoon leader and Happy were killed instantly. Steenick received serious injuries.

This action and the serious consequences that followed would be repeated again many times - not just in Korea but in Vietnam. Although not trained to detect booby traps, Happy had sensed something amiss. The handler knew it also, but couldn't pin it down. When someone decides not to trust the dog, the ramifications can, and often are, deadly.

In every conflict starting with World War II, what military dog teams have accomplished has been overshadowed by the sheer size of the war that encompassed them. It was true then and is the same today. In Korea, the impact of military dogs is miniscule, but not if you happen to be one of the soldiers that owes his life to one.

Robert Fickbohm was a handler with the 26<sup>th</sup> and worked with Hasso. In his book *Cold Noses, Brave Hearts: Dogs and Men of the 26th Infantry Platoon Scout Dog*, he says, "Between June of 1951 and the end of the war on July 27, 1953, they [the

26<sup>th</sup>] were never put in reserve. They gave support to every United States Division and went on patrols with many United Nation Units. The members were awarded a total of three Silver Stars, six bronze stars for Valor, and 35 Bronze Stars for meritorious service. Too many of them earned Purple Hearts."

Did the handlers and scout dogs like Happy, Champ, York, Hasso, Arlo, and many others, have an impact on the war? I suppose it depends on your perspective. But the Chinese obviously did respect them. When front lines stagnated, the Chinese sometimes would set up loud-speakers and pierce the quiet night with propaganda announcements aimed at American troops. On one occasion, which is documented in military records, they bellowed, "Yankee - Take your dog and go home!"

Suggested further reading: *Cold Noses, Brave Hearts: Dogs and Men of the 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Scout Dog Platoon* by Robert Fickbohm and Sandra Fickbohm Granger. Available from Amazon and other sellers.

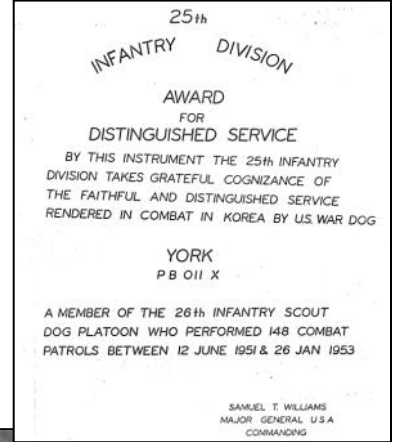
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Yankee—Take your dog continued from page 11



**Left: Major General Williams presents David Hull with an Award for his dog Flash. Two other dogs, Gray and York, were also awarded. Photo: NARA**

**Right: This was the field award given to exceptional dogs during the Korean conflict. Printed near the front lines, the quality, as expected, is not the best. Photo: Author's collection.**



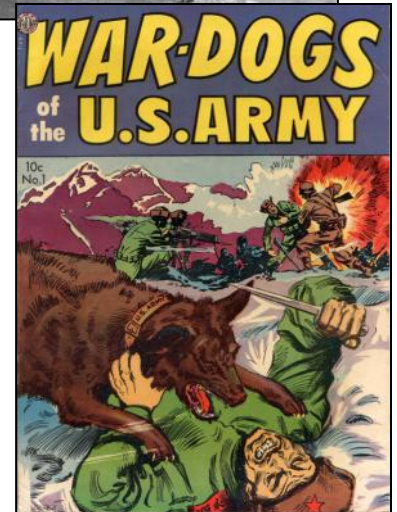
**Left: The 26th IPSD and the 2nd Aviation Company devised a way to quickly transport scout dogs using a Bell H-13 helicopter.**

**Right: Above: A M6-12-8 gas mask is placed on York. The potential threat of chemical agents meant that both handlers and dogs would be issued them. Photo: Courtesy of NARA**



**Left: Robert Fickbohm and his scout dog Hasso. Photo: Robert Fickbohm**

**Right: 1952 Comic book issue. Photo: Author's Collection**



## A Memorial to Xarius T439

By Kellie Peterson

I started working with Xarius on 1 November 2014. He was a ball of energy and kept me on my toes. Soon after we became a team and certified off leash, which is no easy task.

We then got tasked to deploy. We went through training and spent seven months overseas together. He was truly the best at everything he did. Overseas he won the hearts of so many people with whom we had the pleasure of meeting and working. He was always there to brighten people's day and especially mine, on our nightly runs or just sitting with him helped me through some hard times. We conquered the deployment with many successes and returned home. We certified as a team for a second time and continued to work together.

In 2016 I took Xarius to the clinic for a limp in his hind leg. The vets ran every test imaginable to find the cause of the limping. He did not injure himself, he didn't have tick diseases, and so forth. Every test was coming back negative. As they ruled out causes, it became clearer to the vet that Xarius had Immune Mediated Poly Arthritis. IMPA causes a dog's immune system to attack his joints for reasons unknown. Over the next few months Xarius went to Colorado for care that saved his life. Xarius had ups and downs nearly daily and weekly. He had swollen legs and wounds on his body that were unable to heal. Everyone in the kennels did their part. I spent many early mornings and late nights, even spending the weekends with him when he wasn't feeling well. Right there with me were the vets.

Xarius retired 22 July 2016 and made his way to his final home. He spent most of his days playing with a plethora of toys spread across my living room floor. It wasn't easy though...He could barely walk up and down stairs so I carried him. He started to lose his appetite and I spent most my days trying to get him to eat. He could only play fetch at a foot distant because he would trip and fall. He fell a couple times a day and as I rushed over, he was already trying to get back up. He had the biggest fight I've ever seen. He didn't give up. Xarius's body finally started shutting down early on 1 August 2016. Even though he wanted to fight his body wasn't going to allow it. Xarius was laid to rest around 11 am on 1 August 2016. I feel as

though I am missing a piece of my heart. For some of us, we don't have husbands, wives, or children. Xarius was my family, my best friend, and my working dog. I spent more time with him than anyone since we started working together. What heard I went through can't be described.

He was always my protector until he became sick when I became *his* protector. To put it in perspective... I have never cried this much or been as heartbroken over anything in my life until this point. I've lost along the way but not like this. Xarius... You touched so many hearts. I would have gone to the ends of the earth for you, carried you everyday, stayed by your side. I'm truly going to miss you. I love you, Bub.



Above: Xarius' official DoD portrait.



Left: On deployment, Xarius sports a MWD TSA hat sent to his handler.



Below: A last good-bye.

## Sit. Stay. Support.

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MWD TSA is committed to ethics in everything we do. We are honored to be among the select few non-profit organizations to receive the GuideStar Gold Participant seal.

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!

Kennel Talk is the proud recipient of multiple  
GSDCA Special Newsletter Awards!



We invite you to join the ever-growing MWD TSA family!

To learn, volunteer, engage or subscribe, click here for info:

<http://mwdtsa.org/mwdtsa-one-click.html>

## From the Archives

## Task Force Oregon



**A light-hearted moment captured on film during Task Force Oregon showcases yet another skill of the military working dogs, their ability to bring levity and joy during the middle of an offensive push simply by being a dog.**

**At left, three members of Task Force Oregon pretend to teach their dog how to call in for air support.**

**Task Force Oregon, a Vietnam era tasking, became operational in April of 1967, after being planned earlier in the year by General William C. Westmoreland, as a way to reduce the footprint of the North Vietnamese soldiers in I Corps, the bitter most northern area of South Vietnam.**

**The multi-brigade force landed near the South China Sea at the Chu Lai Airstrip and shortly after started search and destroy operations in Southern Quang Ngai Province with support from several Infantry Platoon Scout Dogs (IPSD.)**

**The 25th IPSD take a break and relax in Quang Nai Province as part of Task Force Oregon in 1967.**

Photo courtesy of the National Archives