
January 2014
Award Winning
Monthly Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue 1

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winning MWD publication!

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*As you are making your
year-end contributions,
please remember our dog
teams serving far from
home.*

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Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

MWDTSA KENNEL TALK



Photo by Cpl. Aaron Diamant, USMC

The Night Watchman

By Dixie Whitman

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you one and all.

Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc. (MWDTSA) appreciates your vital support over the past year. With your help, during 2013, our organization has sent out over 700 packages, has recognized handlers from seven different installations, touching Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine dog teams, and has participated in several public education initiatives.

You make the difference! Every time you part-

ner with MWDTSA, you make us stronger and more vital and your helping hand unites with others and reaches further than any of us could imagine. Thank you so much to all of our supporters on behalf of the brave men and bravest of women who work with America's amazing military working dogs.

We wish you all a prosperous, healthy and happy 2014. Please make regular visits to our website at www.mwdtsa.org one of your New Year's resolutions. Happy New Year!

Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst New Jersey Visit

By Dixie Whitman



Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JBMDL) is home to the 87th Security Force Squadron, comprised of both Air Force and Navy dog teams. At the kennels there was a sea of both Air Force green and Navy blue camo. The handlers and MWDs from that day: MA3 Quiles-Rivera and MWD Betty, MA2 Molinaro and MWD Rex, MA2 Agauyo, SSgt Price and Dio, MA3 Cota and Peg, MSgt Sherry, MA2 Minjum and Quator, SSgt Eisenhart, MA1 Calabro and Bendzi, TSgt Carr and Szultan, TSgt Francis, MA2 Lee and Brix.

It was a tale of two weather patterns, a sort of schizophrenic day: an overcast sky, punctuated alternatively by a spitting rain and then by brief bursts of sunlight. This duality was also reflected in the kennel that MWDTSA was about to visit at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JBMDL); home to the 87th Security Force Squadron which is comprised of both Air Force and Navy dog teams. And, if that were not energy enough, another nearby Navy kennel from Navy Weapons Station Earle was invited to join us for the day.

MWDTSA staff and guests were greeted enthusiastically and escorted onto the base by MSgt Sherry (USAF) and MA1 Calabro (USN). At the kennels there was a sea of both Air Force green and Navy blue camo, with excited dogs barking as we toured. Led by Kennel Master Sherry; nothing gets a kennel whirling like strangers in their midst. To be honest, we were all animated, thrilled to be visiting this great base; four of our guests had not visited a military working dog kennel and suddenly we were gifted with three different kennel staffs rolled into one day.

After the tour, a handful of dog teams, beginning with Staff Sgt. Allison Price and

MWD Dio, gave us a great demonstration of the Six Phases of Aggression used by dog handlers. The decoy was none other than MSgt. Sherry. Dio did a great take down!

We witnessed MWD Quator racing through the obstacle course at the command of his handler MA2 Winjum. What a great team they were.

All of the dogs were amazing and the handlers were so pleasant. It wasn't long until we went inside for a luncheon of pizza and drinks. This gave us a chance to sit and visit with our hosts and find out all of the people that we know in common. The K9 world really is "A Small World after all."

In the end, we said reluctant good-byes, but having met some great folks that day from Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst and NWS Earle, we were honored that they took some time from their busy schedules to spend time with us.

Please enjoy these great images of the day.

Below: All of the dogs were amazing and the handlers were so pleasant.



JBMDL continued from page 2



This page: Staff Sgt. Allison Price and MWD Dio, gave us a great demonstration of the Six Phases of Aggression used by dog handlers. The decoy was MSgt. Sherry. Dio did a great take down!



Cajun Veteran’s Day Reunion and Care Packaging

By Col Dick Baumer (USA Ret.)

Two generations of veterans with one cause assemble care packages for deployed K9 teams during their annual Cajun Veteran’s Day get-together.

For several days, members of the 62nd Infantry Platoon (Combat Tracker) had been arriving at Estel and Judy Matt’s home in Lake Charles, LA and quickly pitching in to help box up donations headed to deployed K9 teams on behalf of the MWD TSA. Their mission was to get all 132 boxes packed, taped, labeled and mailed before their annual reunion with veterans of the Lake Charles Louisiana Army National Guard so they could once again "laissez les bon temps rouler" (let the good times roll).

Platoon members came from as far as Pennsylvania, Illinois, Georgia, Alabama, Texas and California. During the weekend they were treated to great Cajun food as well as BBQs at fishing camps, casino visits and fishing in nearby Johnson Bayou.

The ties between this Combat Tracker platoon and the MWD TSA are

strong and special. The 501(c)(3), all-volunteer non-profit organization was co-founded by Dixie Whitman and her husband, Jerry, and LTC Ken Besecker (USA Ret.), formerly a Commander of the 62IPCT during 1970-71. The history of the Lake Charles Veteran’s Day celebration is a little more complicated.

Sergeant Estel Matt was a visual tracker with the 62IPCT in Vietnam during 1970-71. The mission of the Combat Tracker Teams was, in typical Army jargon, to "re-establish contact" with enemy forces...which he did exceptionally well, despite being wounded in action. Estel was the sparkplug in reuniting members who served with the unit during 1967-1973. Starting in 2000 the platoon members have gotten together annually all over the country, in places like Branson, Mo., Canton, Ohio, Dothan, Ala. and Savannah, Ga.



Above: Estel Matt, the host of the annual Cajun Veteran’s Day reunion stirs his Gumbo. [Dick Baumer photo]

Below: Vietnam and Iraq Veterans at the annual Cajun Fest, hosted by Estel Matt’s family since 2006. [Carmen Matt photo]



Above: A "Star Card" was included in each Q4 care package and presented to Iraq and Vietnam veterans at the event. The cards were assembled by school children in Dallas, Ga., Gorman, Texas, Abingdon, Va. And Paterson, N.J.. Each "card" was signed by one of the volunteers.



Reunion and Care Packaging continued from page 4

In the Spring of 2004, Estel's son Zack, a member of A Company, 3rd Battalion 156th Infantry Regiment (Mechanized), 256th Brigade Combat Team (BCT) Louisiana ARNG in Lake Charles, deployed with his buddies for a one-year tour in Iraq. They returned in September 2005 and Zack's last drill with the unit was in January 2006.

On Veteran's Day in 2006, Estel, now an Area Manager for Family Dollar Stores, decided to commemorate the anniversary of his son's unit homecoming with a Cajun feast of gumbo, boudin sausage and other Louisiana specialties. It was an extraordinary celebration since the Matt family was represented by three generations who held the Combat Infantryman's Badge (CIB)—Zack (Iraq), Estel (Vietnam), his Dad, Nelson (WWII) and Uncle Issac (Korea). The CIB is special since it is earned only by being an Infantryman in combat—sometimes known as a "self-activated, pop-up target." The homecoming reunion included

members of his Combat Tracker platoon to connect with the Louisiana veterans.

Ever since that first Veteran's Day event, Estel and his wife, Judy, and their entire family have organized an annual event. In subsequent years they welcomed back Lake Charles National Guard members from subsequent deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as newly "discovered" platoon members and it has become a regular happening for the Iraq and Vietnam vets. This year it was very special because veterans from two generations supported one cause, packing donations for another generation of deployed K9 teams.

The Matt family are the embodiment of true American Patriots—"Citizen-Soldiers" who have served their country with distinction and continue to support and honor veterans of following generations. And, Estel makes one heck of a good Gumbo.

Right: 62IPCT wives packing the Q4 MWD TSA care boxes. (Front to Back) Helen Spivy, Darlene Habel and Chris Eubanks. [Carmen Matt photo]



Below: Hosts Estel and Judy Matt.



Above: The "assembly line" for packing the care boxes extended out into the yard. (Left to Right) CT Hinely, Carmen Matt, Estel Matt, Josh Matt. (Carmen Matt photo)

Right: Dick Baumer and Estel Matt fill care packages under the watchful supervision of CT Hinely. (Carmen Matt photo)



Fourth Quarter Packages Received



Left: MWD Nira: "Nira and I love our package!! Thank you!! Please let everyone that helped know we greatly appreciate it. Nira wouldn't sit still or stop jumping and running around getting into trouble long enough for me to set everything up nicely. Sorry!! But she loved her KONG."



Right Bbailey with his care package array. Here's a note from the handler: "Got a care package today from the Military Working Dog Team Support Association! I want to thank them for everything they do to send myself and many other deployed MWD teams so much great stuff."



Below: Beny with the Star Card, assembled by elementary students from New Jersey, Texas and Georgia. MWD TSA received many photos of MWD Beny and Hatos with their goodies.



Above: Beny with his new KONG toy.

Above: MWD Frigo with this note from his handler: "To the Members of the 62nd IPCT, First and foremost, I would like to thank each of you for your prior service. I am humbled to have supporters who have served alongside of our four legged friends. It also humbles me to know that I am not forgotten by the American people. I have attached a picture of my partner, MWD Frigo. We can't say enough how grateful we are to have supporters like yourself. If possible, please forward this email to all donors and supporters who I was unable to attach in this email. Thanks for the package, and thanks for your continued support."



4th Qtr Packages continued from page 6

MWD TSA 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 thank all the companies and individuals who gave recent donations, including:

Bethany United Methodist Church, Smyrna, Ga.

Bil-Jac Foods, Inc., Medina, Ohio

DeBeukelaer Corp, Madison, Wis.

Doctors Foster & Smith, Rhinelander, Wis.

Dog School 101, Marietta, Ga.

Duke Cannon Supply Co, Ada, Mich.

Earth Bath Pet Care, San Francisco, Ca.

Bruce & Kristi Hartshorn, Abington, Va.

Imagine Publishing, Watertown, Mass.

Jelly Belly Candy Company, Fairfield, Ca.

John Paul Pet LLC, Las Vegas, Nev.

Leash on Life, Iowa City, Iowa

Loud Truck EFG, Spokane, Wa.

Manosota APWU Local 7136, Tallevast, Fla.

National Football League, New York, N.Y.

Paradise Fruit Co, Plant City, Fla.

Popcornopolis, El Segundo, Ca.

Adam Potolsky, Sunnyvale, Ca.

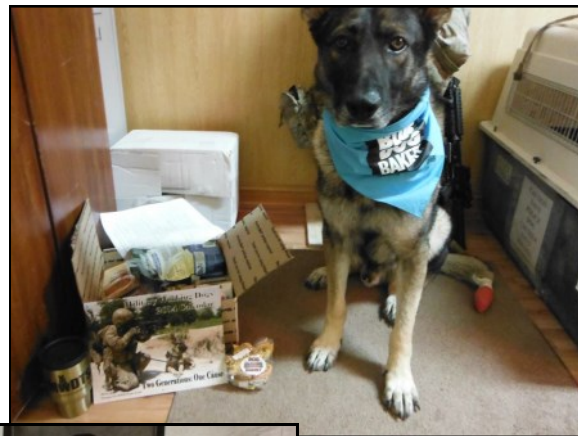
Rodgers Family Coffee, Lincoln, Ca.

Sarah Thomford, Waterloo, Wis.

Tim's Cascade Snacks, Algona, Wa.

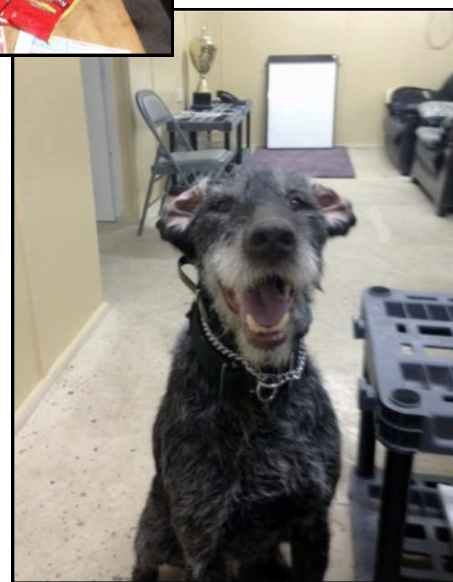
Top Dogs Pet Boutique, Kennesaw & Roswell, Ga.

Right: Roxy with her new care package, sporting her new blue bandana.



Left: Storm, with his handler, showcasing the goodies they and their fellow kennel mates received.

Right: MWD Kanjer, a German Wire Haired Pointer and his handler: "I would like to say thank you so much for all the care packages that you had sent our way." "Once again thank you so much for supporting our kennels during the holidays. I've also included a few photos of my dog Kanjer."



Finally, a message from a location where photos are not allowed: "Me and MWD Dzamar have received two care packages!!!! Thank You so much for the much needed items!!!! Truly the best packages ever!!!!"

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Military Working Dog Helps Protect Service Members

By Sgt Anthony Lee

U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Antony S. Lee

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – After Tali, a military working dog, cleared a room at the Joint Regional Afghan National Police Center ahead of a meeting, he waited in the hallway with his handler, Air Force Staff Sgt. Kellie Peterson.

Naturally, soldiers in the area were drawn to Tali. Some briefly petted him while others asked Peterson about him. One Afghan National Army soldier took a photo of him with his phone.

Tali, a 4-year-old German shepherd, is a patrol and explosives military working dog. His job is to clear routes, compounds, rooms and open areas by sniffing for and detecting the presence of explosive odors.

Peterson, who is with the 466th Air Expeditionary Group, has been Tali's handler since February 2013. She deployed to Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, with Tali

in July from Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D.

"They try to keep dog and handler together as long as they can because it builds rapport," Peterson said, adding that she is Tali's second handler. "Knowing how the dogs work, how they change behavior during detection – that all comes over time."

Peterson and Tali are both currently attached to Headquarters, Regional Command (South). They usually work with infantry platoons and Office of Special Investigations service members.

Recently, however, the personal security officers of International Security Assistance Force leaders have requested military working dogs for their missions.

"When you're a dog handler, you're attached to anybody and everybody," Peterson said.

On Tuesday, Oct. 1, Tali's job



Above: Sgt. 1st Class Josh Conley, a personal security officer for Regional Command (South), leads Air Force Staff Sgt. Kellie Peterson, a military working dog handler, and Tali, a military working dog, to a room at the Joint Regional Afghan National Police Center to clear it before the start of a partnership meeting that leaders of the International Security Assistance Force and Afghan National Security Forces attended on Oct. 1, 2013. Peterson and Tali have been working together since February 2013 and both have been in Afghanistan since July. Their job is to clear routes, compounds, rooms and open areas of explosives.



Left: Staff Sgt. C.J. Mayo, a personal security officer for Regional Command (South), looks at Tali, a military working dog, at the Joint Regional Afghan National Police Center on Oct. 1, 2013.

MWD continued from page 8

was to clear a room at the JRAC in Kandahar province before the start of a partnership meeting that Maj. Gen. Paul J. La-Camera, 4th Infantry Division and RC(S) commanding general, and Afghan National Security Force leaders attended.

"The dog's primary purpose was explosives detection," said Sgt. 1st Class Josh Conley, a personal security officer for RC(S). "That's what the dog was trained to do."

Conley added that military working dogs help prevent Green-on-Blue incidents. "The dog is not used to intimidate, but rather to deter," he said.

Peterson's first mission with Tali in Afghanistan was with an infantry platoon, when they helped clear multiple abandoned compounds.

"We get attached to platoons and we ride out to wherever their objectives are," she said. "We try to find the safest routes. We're clearing the roadways so everyone behind us stays safe."

When a military working dog detects the odor of an explosive, it changes behavior, alerting the handler that a threat is close.

"They're not trained to look for the actual

IEDs (improved explosive devices) , they're trained to sniff for explosive odors," she said. "They're trained to go to the highest concentration of odor."

On days that Peterson and Tali are not out on missions, they conduct training exercises. The training includes a kennel master planting an odor outside somewhere so Tali can detect it and alert Peterson, just as he would on a mission.

When there is a mission, Peterson is ready to go outside the wire with Tali to help protect service members from explosive devices.

"There have been no finds this year surrounding KAF," she said, adding that it is a good thing because that means "everybody is safe."

Tali is often popular with service members at KAF, many of whom have dogs of their own back home.

"It's a big morale builder for people missing their dogs back home," said Peterson, who also has a dog of her own. "You miss your dog but Tali is my work dog so I love him too. He keeps me safe."



Above: Air Force Staff Sgt. Kellie Peterson and Tali, walk down a hallway at the Joint Regional Afghan National Police Center. Tali is popular with service members at KAF, many of whom have dogs of their own back home.

Story Time Success

Nikki Rohrig, an MWDTSA volunteer, coordinated a great event for the local children of Abingdon, Va. by organizing a story time around Military Working Dogs. Presenting the program were two former handlers, Jodi and Jonathan Jackson, and their dog Kylee. Both of the Jacksons were recipients of numerous MWDTSA care packages on their deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The numbers of students and adults attending attested to the keen interest in military working dogs. Everyone was invited to ask questions and many local residents donated to MWDTSA care packages. Thanks, Nikki, Jodi, Jonathan and Kylee. Great job, everyone!



Left: Jodi and Jonathan addressing the crowd with Kylee by their side.

Right: Nikki's kids, Gavin and Sophie, flanking Kylee.



U. S. Military Working Dog Teams National Monument

By Linda Strickland
Photos courtesy of Bill Childress

The unveiling of the U. S. Military Working Dog Teams National Monument took place on October 28, 2013 at Lackland AFB, San Antonio, TX. Several hundred spectators were on hand which included past and present dog handlers along with numerous dignitaries. John C. Burnam spearheaded the monument drive starting some eight years ago and which finally came to fruition with the help of countless others.

The monument consists of a nine foot bronze dog handler joined with four dogs

representing the four breeds of dogs used by the military. The tribute represents all dogs and handlers starting with WW II. Behind this grouping stands a large, gray granite wall describing the dog's role in service to our country. On the back of the wall, various etchings of dog teams are depicted starting with WW II.

Off to the side is a small, bronze water fountain which epitomizes a handler pouring water from his canteen into his helmet while his dog waits for a drink. The scene

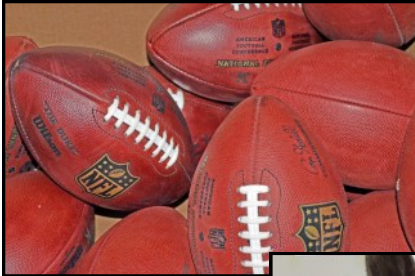
portrays the closeness and bond that is shared between the two.

The commentaries given by the handlers during the ceremony were deeply inspiring. But the common factor derived from all of them was the bond between them and their dogs which was like no other and everlasting. One recited a quote from Will Rogers; "If there are no dogs in Heaven, then when I die I want to go where they went." So true.



Football Fever: MWDTSA's Famous "Super Bowl in a Box" Coming Soon

By Dixie Whitman



Our first quarter care packages in 2014 will feature our popular "Super Bowl in a Box" with a theme that highlights items suitable to celebrate the big game. In anticipation of our Super Bowl boxes, our ever-amazing donation guru, Dick Baumer, persuaded the Atlanta Falcons to donate 17 NFL Practice

Footballs. We sent these official NFL footballs out as special prizes during the 4th quarter to let the handlers know that Super Bowl is on the way. We love having Dick on our team, and, from the looks of it, the dog teams who were randomly drawn as recipients, enjoyed the proceeds of his hard work.



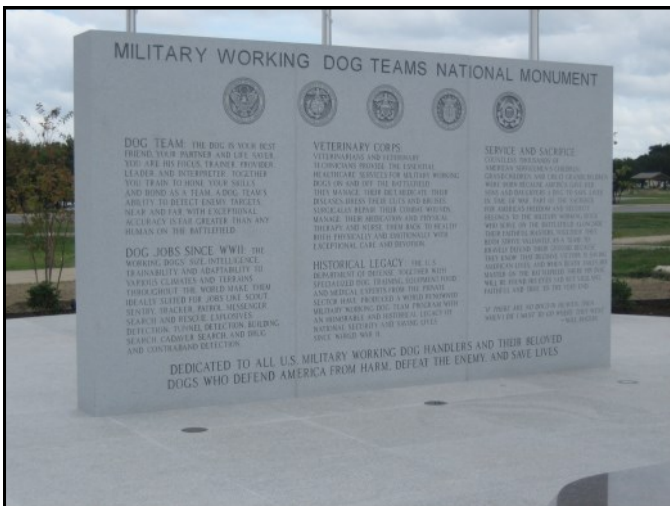
Below Left: Handler, Dan, one of the lucky recipients.

Left: MWD Beny poses with Nichole's football. Nichole said she couldn't trust her own dog, MWD Hatos, to pose with the ball since he is such a ball fanatic.



Right: Loretta shares the game with her favorite player, Edo.

National Monument continued from page 10



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Operation Tusca-Lucca

Pet Supplies Plus of Tuscaloosa held a special month-long donation drive for MWDTSA. Operation Tusca-Lucca sought donations of football dog toys for the MWDTSA's care packages in honor of Lucca, a retired K-9 who lost her leg in Afghanistan in 2012. Each KONG football purchased and donated at the store also entered the donor in a drawing for a Go-Pro HERO3 Black camera. Donations were accepted all month and the drawing was held on Nov.30th.



Above and Right: Pet Supplies Plus set up a display table featuring MWDTSA plus a patriotic end cap to publicize Operation Tusca-Lucca.



Left: During her 2012 deployment, Lucca was wounded in action and lost a leg. Lucca was adopted by her former handler, US Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Chris Willingham, a native of Tuscaloosa and fervent Tide football fan. Some of Chris's relative made donations in support of Operation Tusca-Lucca.

MWDTSA at Community Pet Education Day



MWDTSA volunteer Allison Merrill, of Sun-Dog Kennels, set up and manned a booth to spread awareness of MWDTSA and its mission in early November. The event was a Community Pet Education Day run by AC Paw's, a local Traverse City, Mich. animal rescue as a fundraiser.

Allison was aided by her dogs, Zion and Zen. She hopes to make this an annual presence at the event.



Zion and Zen help Allison man the MWDTSA table at the Michigan event.

Louisiana War Dog Memorial

Photos courtesy of Diana Baker

The Louisiana War Dog Memorial in Houma, La. was dedicated on November 10th with approximately 250-300 people in attendance. The memorial was created by Ms. Diane Baker in honor of Louisiana's Vietnam Dog Handlers.



Left: WWII and Vietnam Veterans.

Right: Close up of the dog handler statue.



Left: Vietnam-Era dog handler veterans.



Kids That Make Us Smile

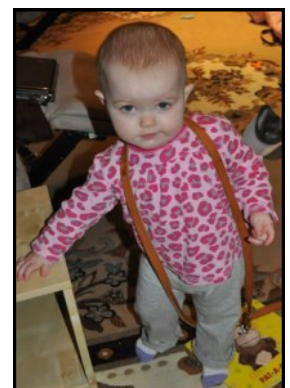
By Dixie Whitman.

Children and animals have a unique bond and MWD TSA's dog teams have always enjoyed support from kids through their cards and letters. Here are some cool youngsters who have captured our heart.



Left: Veterans from the Vietnam War and Operation Iraqi Freedom gathered together in Louisiana over Veterans' Day to pack and ship our 4th quarter care packages. Our packages got a big thumb's up from the "master-box-putter-together-er", Hayden Rigdon, grandson of 62nd IPCT Visual Tracker, Estel Matt.

Right: Emma Pate's daddy is a dog handler stationed in Europe. She has a new puppy and she's wearing her leash just like any other seasoned dog handler does - she picked this up by watching her daddy work. She cracks us up.



Military Working Dog Team Support Association, Inc.

Sit. Stay. Support.

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

Kennel Talk is the proud recipient of a GSDCA Special Newsletter Award!

Please Recycle by Sending to a Friend



As you are making your year-end contributions, please remember our dog teams serving far from home.

*Contact us for more info at:
info@mwdtsa.org*

Photo of the Month

Left to right: Raymond Everhart with Otis (Combat Tracker Dog), CT Hineley (dog handler of Traveler, also a Combat Tracker black lab) and LeRoy Habel with Major, a Scout Dog assigned to 62nd Infantry Platoon (Combat Tracker). Hineley and Habel were both present at the reunion in Lake Charles to pack care packages. (See story on pages 4-5).

