

THAILAND DOG HANDLERS

USAF Dog Handlers Who Defended Front-Line Combat Air Bases In Thailand Throughout The Vietnam War

OLD DAWGS and PUPS

Dog Handlers of the Vietnam War Supporting US Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan

Sponsored by Thailand Dog Handlers at combat Air Bases during the Vietnam War



(08/15/11)

OVER FIVE YEARS OF SUPPORTING OUR K-9 TROOPS!

More than \$65,000 of supplies shipped down range!

<http://www.war-stories.com/odap/ws-odap-index.asp>

Hello everyone! We are currently supporting seven (7) kennels and nineteen (19) deployed Air Force, Army, and Navy teams as of August 15, 2011. August 2011 brings us to five years and eleven months of operation for our "Old Dawgs & Pups" program. Once again, I'd just like to say thank you to all of you that have supported our awesome programs and especially our troops and their canine partners deployed down range.

Area of Operation Status - K-9 Teams Arriving/Departing

We are currently supporting troops at Joint Base Balad, and Sather Air Base (BIAP) Iraq; Bagram Air Base, FOB ACS-2/Kandahar, FOB Lagman, Afghanistan; and Ali Al Salem, Kuwait; and Manas Transit Center, Kyrgyzstan. We have six (6) new Pups to introduce this month

Pups heading home from the AOR

Manas Transit Center, Kyrgyzstan: TSgt Andrew Esparza, Kennel Master, should be back at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, shortly after this report hits the street – it's over 100 degrees everyday Drew!

SSgt Paris Carman & MWD Diesel are now also back at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona.

SSgt Victor Sanz & MWD Astor are now home and on leave at Beale AFB, California. Victor has also helped us adopt SSgt Martin Ratkowsli & MWD Tosca from Beale AFB prior to leave Manas!

Pups arriving in the AOR

Joint Base Balad, Iraq: TSgt Paul Baldwin & MWD Dexter deployed from, the 355th SFS, Davis-Monthan, AFB, Arizona. They are paired with Bob Curnick (NKP).

Sather Air Base, Iraq: TSgt Kurt Lugar, Trainer, deployed from the 355th SFS, Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona. This is Kurt's second tour with OD&P. He is teamed up with Dave Broeker (U-Tapao).

SSgt Erik Martinez & MWD Argo II deployed from the 75th SFS, Hill AFB, Utah. This team is supported by Jon Hemp (TSN). This is Argo's third deployment with OD&P!

Ali Al Salem, Kuwait: SSgt William Booker & MWD Pita deployed from the 22nd SFS, McConnell AFB, Kansas. This is SSgt Booker's second tour with OD&P. The team is once again paired with Jay D. Jones (Udorn)

FOB Lagman, Afghanistan: SSgt Martin Ratkowsli & MWD Tosca deployed from the 9th SFS, Beale AFB, California. This team is teamed with Bill Gunter (NKP).

Pups arriving in the AOR – Continued

Bagram, Afghanistan: TSgt Thomas Henzl, Kennel Master, deployed from the 49th SFS, Holloman AFB, New Mexico, is “Boots on the Ground” (BOG) at Bagram, Afghanistan and recruiting new pups. He is paired with Bill Cummings (U-Tapao).

386th ESFS Ali Al Salem, Kuwait



SrA Melissa Schmalhorst hoists MWD Glen on her shoulder to celebrate her selection as a new Staff Sergeant! No, only kidding, we received this photograph a few days prior to her being notified that she has been promoted – but it sure seemed like a great caption!

They are supported by Steve & Lise Gattis (CRB). Melissa is a “Vietnam era history buff” and as you might imagine – being paired up with VSPA Past President Steve Gattis is very appropriate – those of you that know Steve can just imagine the information that he will be sharing with Melissa.

The team is deployed from the 92nd SFS, Fairchild AFB, Washington. Sure looks like a dog handler to us!

447th ESFS – Sather Air Base (BIAP), Iraq

SSgt Erick Martinez & MWD Argo II just arrived at Sather Air Base (BIAP), Iraq and is teamed with Jon Hemp. We found this photograph on the internet and thought we’d share it. The photograph was taken at his home base, Hill Air Force Base, Utah, during an exercise. Is that a great looking dog team or what? Welcome aboard Erick and Argo II.



Tour of the Leatherman Tool Group, Portland, Oregon



On July 13, 2011, two Old Dawgs and their spouses visited the Leatherman Tool Group factory in Portland, Oregon. Phil Carroll (Our OD&P Supply Sergeant), his wife Patti, and Bill Cummings (OD&P Kennel Master) and his wife Janice toured the facility. Of course we were met by our “Leatherman Angel” Juli Warner who took us on the grand tour. We viewed the production lines where our Surges and MUTs were produced and met some of the greatest workers in the industry.

We also had the privilege of meeting Jake Nichol, President/CEO, Leatherman Tool Group. We visited with him and discussed the partnership between Leatherman, Old Dawgs & Pups, and how we are supplying our K-9 troops with some of the best tools in the world!

Mr. Nichol and his employees are proud to be helping the people in the U.S. military by making stuff that’s useful every day in the war zones.

One of our greatest thrills was getting to meet the people who make these great tools and it was our pleasure to get to thank them personally for the job they are doing to help our deployed troops. Shaking their hands was indeed an honor.

We can’t even tell you how much fun we had and visiting the store afterwards was like watching two kinds in a candy store. Thank you Leatherman for being our partner – Life is good, God bless America!

We have new Staff & Technical Sergeants!

Congratulations go out to our pups that were recently selected to be promoted to Staff & Technical Sergeants



Name	Deployed Location & Year	Sponsors
S/TSgt Justin Kitts	Bagram & FOB Wilson, Afghanistan	Patsy Perrotto
SrA/Staff Melissa Schmalhorst	Ali Al Salem, Kuwait – Currently	Steve & Lise Gattis
SrA/Staff Felipe Alvarado	Joint Base Balad, Iraq – 2009	Jon Hemp
SrA/Staff Mark Bush	FOB Warrior, Iraq – 2008	Ernest Childers

Feed the Dawgs Project 2011

Vietnam Veterans supporting - Active Duty Military Dog Handlers

<http://feedthedawgs.com/default.aspx>



The *Feed the Dawgs* Project is a culmination of United States Military Vietnam Veterans, Active Duty Military Working Dog Personnel, and patriotic citizens joining together to support and recognize the dedication and patriotism of today's Military Working Dog Teams around the globe. The United States Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, and Navy deploy Military Working Dogs in many regions of the world in support of global peace and stability. We feed steak barbecues to active military dog handlers in all branches of United States service as they return from or "ship out" for "deployment" to the front lines on the War on Terror.

If you are interested in assisting in one of the projects or need more information about "*Feed the Dawgs*" please contact Jon Hemp at jmhemp@feedthedawgs.com

Here is the Feed the Dawgs schedule for the remainder of 2011 – Get Involved!

27	August	Navy - NBVC Ventura, CA
17	September	Air Force - Beale AFB (Sacto), CA
8	October	USMC - MCAS Yuma/YPG, Yuma, AZ
22	October	Army - 18th MP Fort Huachuca, AZ
19	November	USAF - Luke AFB, Glendale, AZ

Other News concerning OD&P Graduates



SrA James Campana, just back from a deployment at Ali Al Salem, Kuwait had his priorities together – one of the first things he did when he got home was to get together with his sponsor Peggy Finzgar. James is stationed at Little Rock AFB, Arkansas and was home on leave when the two got together. They had lunch and Peggy put together at tour with the local police department K-9 Section as part of their get together. Is Peggy something else or what? From the looks of the smiles on both of their faces – they must have had a great visit. Thanks again Peggy for all that you do for Old Dawgs & Pups.

Floods at Minot AFB, North Dakota

We are sure that many, if not all of you, have heard or have been following the devastating news of the floods that have ravished the area immediately surrounding Minot AFB, North Dakota. We have had eyes and ears on the ground as Old Dawgs & Pups graduate MSgt Jason Somers of the 5th Bomb Wing has kept us current on the situation there at Minot.

He recently advised us of the following “Just wanted to touch base with you now that things have settled down. We’ve been working like dogs, no pun intended. Many people/homes have been displaced or damaged. I was luck in not having any damage to my house, but I’ve opened it up to let a family of four move in until they get back on their feet. We military need to stick together. Again, thank you very much for the call!”

That’s the kinda’ canine family that we know – taking care of each other! Jason has been that kind of troop since we first met him in the fall of 2005 as the Kennel Master at Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq. He has always been known as the Kennel Master that has “always put his troops first”. Jason did two tours with OD&P and was supported by Dale Miller (Ubon).

Thanks again Jason for representing our profession and OD&P each and every day – You are once again “Da’ Man”!

Other News concerning OD&P Graduates – Continued

We've lost a K-9 Warrior

We just heard from SSgt Ted Carlson concerning so very sad news about MWD Rico, the partner of SSgt Philip Mendoza from the 820th Group at Moody AFB, Georgia. After returning from deployment at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, SSgt Mendoza took MWD Rico for his post deployment check up. The veterinarian diagnosed Rico with cancer that was growing very quickly. Due to the aggressive nature of the disease, the decision was made to put him down on July 11, 2011. "It was very sad for all of us around here, but Rico was hurting and he's in a better place now" wrote SSgt Carlson. We've had contact with SSgt Mendoza and have expressed our condolences to him and all of the members of the 820th CSG on behalf of OD&P. The team deployed twice with us and we are all so sorry for the loss of this canine hero. Below are several of the great photographs that SSgt Mendoza has shared with us during their deployments together.

5/1/2009 - JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq — Staff Sgt. Philip Mendoza, 332nd Security Forces Group military working dog handler, pets his MWD Rico, wearing "doggles," during training aboard a helicopter here April 21. The training teaches the team how to safely and properly enter and exit aircraft, and prepares it for future air assault missions. Sergeant Mendoza is deployed here from Moody Air Force Base, Ga., and is a native of Lancaster, Texas. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Elizabeth Rissmiller) SSgt Mendoza is supported by Dixie Whitman and Kelly Bateman.



Military working dogs, handlers train for mission success

by 1st Lt. Trisha Eldredge
8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

8/8/2011 - KUNSAN AIR BASE, Republic of Korea -- At 10 a.m. on Aug. 5, it was in the upper 80s and humid, but military working dog handlers Staff Sgts. Chad Ditch and Nick Jensen were outside running their puppy, MWD Bbruiser, through the obedience course as part of the daily training the dogs receive. To identify the litter and the fact that he is just a puppy, Bbruiser is spelled with two first letters. "MWD Bbruiser is just a puppy, but he shows promise even at his young age," said Ditch. "Dogs don't understand the difference between right and wrong in the same way that humans do and must be taught obedience," he said. "You have to have a lot of patience when you work with dogs."

The obedience course highlights the capabilities of the dogs, which spend hours of training on patrol, base defense and drug and explosive detection. The course prepares the dogs for whatever obstacles they might encounter, like tunnels or windows.

As Ditch and Bbruiser ran through the course, Jensen served as the aggressor and, on command, Bbruiser attacked, biting onto the dog suit Jensen was wearing with 400 to 700 pounds of force. After each successful attack, Bbruiser was rewarded with his favorite toy. This type of training builds trust between the dog and handler and improves the skills of the puppy. "Being a MWD Handler was the best decision I have made in my career. You basically get paid to play with dogs. Plus, as K-9 handlers, we are a big family," said Ditch.

Master Sgt. Sam Figueroa, 8th SFS kennel master, observed as the team ran through the course. Figueroa also loves working with the dogs and it's evident. For all but five years of his career he has worked with K-9 units. He oversees the MWD program here, advises the commander on how to best utilize the teams, and ensures proper training is conducted with handlers and MWDs. "There were a lot of changes during those five years I didn't work with the dogs, but I am catching up and still love what I do every single day. The mission is fundamentally the same, and that is to save lives and provide protection," Figueroa said.

In addition to the obedience course, teams also run through bomb detection scenarios in order to receive validation. The dogs need to be qualified in different areas, such as a warehouse or vehicle lot, and must pass with a 95 percent or above. "It typically takes a dog 20 to 30 minutes to complete a course and three weeks to a month to have the dogs certified," said Figueroa.

The dogs go through extensive evaluations and are tested for gun shyness, aggressiveness and searching behavior. Their physical examination includes blood tests, radiographs and a thorough medical physical. If the dog meets all of these standards it can begin the program at Lackland AFB, Texas. Kunsan currently has nine Belgian Malinois, five German Shepherds and one Dutch Shepherd from Lackland, Figueroa went on to say.

"Many dogs are washed out of the program because they just can't hack it," said Figueroa. But the dogs aren't the only ones who must meet requirements, because the MWD handlers also need to meet certain standards. They must be in security forces, have the rank of senior airman or higher and have approval from the kennel master.

Kunsan is unique in that there is a civilian handler as well. Mr. Choe Han Pil, kennel attendant, is the only civilian authorized to handle the dogs unattended and does everything from feeding and petting to cleaning the facility. It is clear that Mr. Choe, who has worked at the kennel for six years and on base for the past 34 years, loves his job and is an integral part of the team. "MWDs love him because he is probably the only person constant in their lives. If the dogs know your smell they will be very friendly toward you," said Figueroa. "If you are a new guy coming into the kennel, be careful."

Military working dogs, handlers train for mission success - Continued

The facility contains 23 kennels, an isolation room in which dogs are quarantined if they become sick, a kitchen, a veterinary room and offices. The dogs follow a feeding schedule and meals are prepared twice a day, going through about 200 pounds of food per week. An Army vet from Camp Humphreys visits once a month to administer medication and provide check-ups for the dogs. The rigorous training the dogs receive leaves no room for unhealthy dogs.

"A few weeks ago, we had a dog, Iian, that got heat exhaustion," said Figueroa. "Dogs typically have a temperature ranging from 100 to 102 degrees Fahrenheit. Iian had a temperature of 111 F. Handlers did a great job recognizing the signs of heat stress and were able to provide first-aid. Within an hour we were able to bring it back to 102 F. The veterinarian training we receive definitely came in handy," he said.

Iian is doing fine now, but is still monitored closely because if a dog has heat exhaustion once, it is likely it can happen again. The handler team switched Iian to work nights to minimize the likelihood that he will have heat exhaustion again. All of the handlers truly care about their dogs, perhaps Figueroa the most.

"I grew with up with all kinds of animals around me. My uncle owned a farm and my dad maintained an aviary; animals were a constant part of my life. I grew up with a German Shepherd, Toby, from the age of four until I graduated high school. He died while I was in basic training," said Figueroa. So when I learned I could be a dog handler and work with German Shepherds I didn't hesitate to volunteer. I love the dogs that I have been privileged enough to work with," he said.



Here are a few "candid shots" of SSgt Chad Ditch and Bbruiser. SSgt Chad Ditch was supported by Kelly Bateman (Ubon) during his tour at Camp Cropper, Iraq in 2009. Many of you met him at the VSPA reunion at Lackland last year.

Thailand Dog Handlers Group Fundraisers to benefit four organizations!

Fundraiser 1: Win one of two unique collections of Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and, Coast Guard Service Brassards and Shields, and K-9 memorabilia. Valued at \$350.00 (Brassards) and \$250.00 (K-9 memorabilia), respectively.

All donated funds raised by this project will go to two proven charitable funds, “**The Thailand Dog Handlers Web Page**” <http://thailanddoghandlers.com> And, Dixie Whitman’s “**Military Working Dog Team Support Association**” <http://www.mwdtsa.org> Winner to be announced at VSPA Reunion in October.



Fundraiser 2: Win one of two unique collections of USAF Air Police and Security Police Shields, Brassards, Qualification Pins, and Commemorative Shields. Valued at \$700.00 (Vintage Shields) and \$500.00 (K-9 Shields, badges, etc.), respectively.

All donated funds raised by this project will go to two proven charitable funds, the “**Old Dawgs and Pups Program.**” <http://www.war-stories.com/odap/ws-odap-index.asp> and “**The Nemo’s War Dog Hero’s Memorial Project.**” <http://635thk9.com/tdhnemo.htm> Winner to be announced at VDHA Reunion in October.



For more information and details on how to donate contact John Homa at jmhoma@usit.net Deadline for donation is September 17, 2011. Please put **FUNDRAISER** in the title of the email.

Here's this month's update on the K-9 Supply Program

At the time of this report we have **20** members of the "Old Dawgs & Pups" program actively supporting **19** handlers assigned to seven (7) kennels in Southwest Asia.

Our K-9 Supply program has been coordinated and funded by the "Old Dawgs & Pups". The supporters are members of the VSPA, VDHA, and friends of K-9. A total of **1,401** pieces of equipment has been delivered to our K-9 troops serving in the AOR from August 21, 2005 to August 15, 2011. Over **342** "Old Dawgs and Friends" have supported **69** kennels and **280** K-9 personnel via our program. For additional information on the program please go to:

http://www.pbase.com/635thk9/old_dawgs

Please review the photos, press releases, and more about our ongoing programs.

We have purchased and shipped **\$17,677.00** of supplies for the **69** kennels solely via your personal donations. Including the Leatherman corporate and Helping Udders donations, the total is **\$65,576.00!**

Please note that this figure does not include all the goodies some of you have sent directly, or which came from other organizations we've been involved with but who shipped their donations independently. WAY TO GO K-9 SUPPLY!

List of Supplies Shipped by Old Dawgs & Pups

- 247 Leatherman "Surge" Tools (166) Donated by Leatherman) *
* The Leatherman "Surge"/Muts/Flashlights/Knives donation is valued at approximately **\$44,470.00**
- 163 Thailand Challenge Coins (Donated & Purchased)
- 163 * Leatherman Serac S3 Leatherman Flashlights
- 105 Thailand Historical Base Patches
- 91 Guardian Pet Beds (Pet Edge)
- 75 * Leatherman Knives (Models: c33T, e55, e55B, e33L)
- 52 Kongs (Assorted sizes)
- 40 Sponges
- 40 Cleaning/Scouring Pads
- 40 PSI Water Holes (Dressler's)
- 33 Kygen Port-A-Bowls (Dressler's)
- 25 Doggles (10 Pairs were donated)
- 24 Kygen 2-In-1 Food/Water Bowls (Dressler's)
- 24 Rolls 26"x78" 20% Dark Limo Window Tint (Checker Auto Supply)
- 19 VSPA Challenge Coins (Donated & Purchased)
- 16 Cooling Vests & Extra Cooling Packs (**Helping Udders - Valued at \$3,420.00**)
- 16 Coastal Medium Firm Shedding Blades (Dressler's)
- 16 Classic Long Tooth Undercoat rakes (Dressler's)
- 15 Classic HG Food Dishes (Dressler's)
- 12 Coastal Large Slickers (Dressler's)
- 12 Retractable Leashes (Pet Edge)
- 12 Flat Sided Stainless Steel Water Pails (Pet Edge)
- 12 Bucket Clips (Pet Edge)
- 12 Heavy Guard Handled Water Pails (Dressler's)
- 10 * Leatherman MUT Tools
- 10 Muzzles (Dressler's)
- 10 Heavy Duty Handled Pails - 9 Qt. - (Pet Edge)
- 10 Stainless Steel - 3 Qt Dura-weight Bowls (Pet Edge)

- 10 **Helping Udder Reward Toys (Helping Udders)**
- 9 **Hose Nozzles**
- 8 **K9 Bluelight Supplement (2 pound bags) (Dressler's)**
- 8 **Cooling Wraps (Roshgo Corp)**
- 8 **Cooldanna Cooling Mats (Roshgo Corp)**
- 8 **Sets of Flood Light Bulbs**
- 8 **24" Heavy Duty Floor Squeegees**
- 7 **Digital Thermometers**
- 6 **Set of four Ruff Wear Bark'n Boots Grip Trex (Ray Allen)**
- 6 **Retractable Leashes (Dresslers)**
- 4 **Carabiners**
- 3 **100 Foot Water Hoses**
- 3 **20" Heavy Duty Cleaning Brushes**
- 3 **12" Heavy Duty Cleaning Brushes**
- 3 **5" Heavy Duty Cleaning Brushes**
- 3 **Ceremonial K-9 Badges (Memorial)**
- 2 **Hose Reels - Wheels**
- 2 **50 Foot Water Hoses**
- 2 **Spray Bottles & Sprayers**
- 2 **150 Foot Enclosed Hose Reels**
- 2 *** Leatherman EOD MUT Tools**
- 1 **Large Patrol Harness**
- 1 **Medium Patrol Harness**
- 1 **Drink Mixes & Snacks (Large Box)**
- 1 **Case Toilet Paper (30 Rolls)**
- 1 **Syntek Hidden Sleeve (Ray Allen)**