

THAILAND DOG HANDLERS

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

(01/15/10)

OVER FOUR YEARS OF SUPPORTING OUR K-9 TROOPS!

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

Hello everyone! We are currently supporting nine (9) kennels and thirty-four (34) deployed Air Force, Army, and Navy teams as of January 15, 2010. January 2010 brings us to four years and five 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 FOB Warrior, Camp Cropper, Joint Base Balad, and FOB Falcon; Camp Tallil/Joint Security Station Attack, Iraq; Bagram, Afghanistan; Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar; Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan. We have three (3) new Pups to introduce this month.

Heading home: SSgt Jessica Sonnier is now stateside after her tour at FOB Warrior; SSgt Manuel Rodriguez & Diesel are heading home from Al Dhafra; UAE; SrA Carrie Dowdy & Ciro and SrA Nicole Jensen & Rex are either home or on their way from Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar; and TSgt Mark Ochoa and Staff Sergeants Shiloh Bell, Aaron DeMarte, and Chad O’Neil are heading home from Joint Base Balad.

New Handler at Bagram: SSgt Michael Gwin & MWD Rex deployed from the 7th SFS, Dyess AFB, Texas. This team is supported by Kelly Bateman (Ubon)

New Handler at FOB Warrior, Iraq: TSgt Luke Darche, Kennel Master, deployed from the 82nd SFS, Sheppard AFB, Texas; Supported by Scotty Baker - Safeside; SSgt Casey Ouellette, Trainer, deployed from the 36th SFS, Anderson AFB, Guam; Supported by David Priest (Korat).

Profiles and Photographs of members of Old Dawgs & Pups



John Risse (Pleiku), photographed at Luke AFB and John and MWD Bob taken a few years ago! John and Carolyn have supported six teams since they signed on for OD&P. This is one dedicated pair – if you’re adopted by the Risse’s – you’re in high cotton! Thanks John and Carolyn.

506th ESFS – FOB Warrior, Iraq – January 2010

TSgt Luke Darche, Kennel Master, deployed from the 82nd SFS, Sheppard AFB, Texas and SSgt Casey Ouellette, Trainer, deployed from the 36th SFS, Anderson AFB, Guam, are now "Boots on the ground" at FOB Warrior. They are supported by Scotty Baker (Safeside) & David Priest (Korat) respectively. Both Sergeants have advised us that they very excited about our program. Stand by for more information on 506th during the upcoming year. Welcome aboard guys – we can wait to hear more from FOB Warrior.

Here are a few photographs of the crew at FOB Warrior showing off their Leatherman Surges and Thailand Handler patches that arrived close to Christmas – OK, lets admit it – that's a nice Christmas present!



Left – SSgt Eric Rod, SrA Anthony Richison, and SSgt Jessica Sonnier. They moved around on us a little on the photograph on the right – but it looks like they are very pleased with their gifts.

SSgt Sonnier should be stateside now and she was supported by Lori Lacefield (Kentucky F&W); SSgt Eric Rod is supported by Patsy Perrotto (NKP), and SrA Richison is supported by Chuck Meaders (U-Tapao).

380th ESFS – Al Dhafra, United Arab Emirates



SSgt Manuel Rodriguez and MWD Diesel Sonnier on the flightline. From what we hear – they are packing their bags for the trip back to Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona. They were supported by Debbie and Dale Burton (U-Tapao). I really want to hear what Diesel has to say about the deployment. That's a little inside joke that if you ever ask me about – I will tell you about Diesel!

VFW Post partner up with OD&P

Plans are now under way for two VFW posts to join up with OD&P to support our deployed dog teams. We have been approached by VFW Post 6441 (Oldham-Cummings) from Wimberley, Texas and VFW Post 7539, from Bloomingdale, Illinois to have packages sent to our troops.

Kelly Bateman is the Point of Contact (POC) for Post 6441. Kelly has been in our program since we started and has supported nine (9) teams over the past four years. Joe Palmer, who handled Spike at Binh Thuy in 1968, is going to be our POC from Post 7539.

Both Posts have supported deployed troops by sending “Morale Boxes” to troops deployed down range for quite some time now! Don’t you just love a Veteran?

455th ESFS – Bagram, Afghanistan gearing back up!

SSgt Michael Gwin & MWD Rex deployed from the 7th SFS, Dyess AFB, Texas is now part of our program at Bagram. The team is supported by Kelly Bateman (Ubon) who also served at Dyess – but it was a LONG time ago. The Leatherman “Surges” and other equipment have hit the ground at Bagram and we should be seeing some photos by next month.



SSgt Daniel Flores and MWD “Dolla Bill” just spending some time around the Christmas tree. This team is supported by Mike Regan (NKP). How do you like that harness tag for “Dolla Bill”?



SSgt Steven Gonzalez and MWD Bruno celebrating Christmas at Bagram. This team is supported by Dave Broeker (U-Tapao).

Camp Tallil Air Base & Joint Security Station (JSS) Attack – Iraq

SSgt Justin Aycock and MWD Katya are just all over the place! This is what the country side looks like in the AOR in Iraq. Justin and Katya are supported by Joan & John Smith (U-Tapao).



Here are a few shots of Justin inside a MRAP on patrol – How about that sight picture on the right? Convoy duty – I understand that it just sucks! But, all in a days work for today's MWD teams.



Just a little stop in the country side – stretch those legs and keep those eyes wide open! MRAPS and Humvees – it just doesn't get any better than this – modern transportation – sure beats walking!



MWD Katya shows off the new Thailand Handler Patch – does that just look fantastic or what? Looks like Katya has figured out the seating arrangements for MRAPS & Humvees.

**Thank you Justin for the great photos and thanks for "Flying our colors" again down range.
This sure makes us very proud.**

376th ESFS - Manas Air Base – Krygyzstan



To celebrate the holidays – the members of the 376th ESFS celebrated with a 5K Ruck Run and from the looks of it – everyone had a blast! It looks like SSgt Ben Vasquez and MWD Erik (center) had a great day! That's SSgt Patrick Meade (second from left), SrA Patrick Lau & Arek (third from the left).

Below – SSgt Patrick Meade, MWD Erik, and SSgt Ben Vasquez just get into opening the packages supplied by Dixie Whitman's MWDTSA program. (See article later in newsletter)



376th ESFS - Manas Air Base – Krygyzstan



SSgt Patrick Meade, 376th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron Military Working Dog Kennel Master, demonstrates a chest bite with seven-month-old Rex during a visit by Kyrgyz National University students to the Transit Center. Rex is being trained by the U. S. military in partnership with Kyrgyz State Security Service and will be transferred to the state once he is fully trained. (U.S. Air force photo/Senior Airman Steele C. G. Britton)

SSgt Meade advised that “We are doing a lot of COIN (Capturing hearts and minds) operations here! Myself and the trainer Joe (civilian trainer) have dedicated a crap load of hours training the handlers and dogs of this country. We have assisted this country to winning a patrol dog competition and best in show. They had a litter of puppies and they wanted to do a training comparison. Needless to say our dog Rex is far surpassing the other 7 dogs. He is identifying all the odors and will destroy the man. I am speaking from experience. We had Rex out training and my phone rang so I ran to answer it when all of a sudden I was tagged hard on my hamstring that little sucker took me out”. SSgt Meade is supported by Bill Cummings (U-Tapao).



Left – Training Joe has trained Rex since he was 8 weeks old. Center and Right – Sra Patrick Lau and MWD Arek join in on the training. SrA Lau and Arek, deployed from Hill AFB, Utah, are supported by Jim Coggins (Takhli).

Holiday Packages to the Troops – MWDTSA Program

Once again, thank you to everyone who sent holiday packages down range to support our deployed troops. We all know what it's like to be deployed during these holidays and I think our supports shared their holidays with our MWD teams that are deployed – Happy Holidays!

Here's a little more about the MWDTSA project that sent gifts to our "Pups" during Christmas.

Georgia High School Student Fetches Support for Military Working Dogs Canton, GA – January 3, 2010.

Courtney Griffin, a Georgia High school senior, has the dogs and troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan in her thoughts as she readily coordinates her first big fundraiser for their benefit: selling her personal T-shirt design. Working with Canton-based Military Working Dog Team Support Association (MWDTSA), a 501 (c) 3 organization that supports dogs and handlers, Courtney's design features a military working dog hurdling over the "w" in the acronym "MWDTSA".

Black and tan versions of the shirts, created especially with the dog handlers in mind, have been sent overseas to handlers in Iraq and Afghanistan as part of some Christmas packages. Royal blue and white T-shirts and hoodies are also available for purchase with the same MWDTSA design. Catching the eye of one of Hollywood's own, Muse Watson, who has appeared in TV shows such as *NCIS* and *Prison Break* and the movie *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, placed and took delivery of the very first order in his support of Military Working Dogs. Funds generated from the sale of the t-shirts and hoodies will support the organization's missions.

Courtney chose to work with the Military Working Dog Team Support Association (MWDTSA) as part of her senior project, out of a great respect for the men, women, and canines serving our country. When asked about her contribution to the organization, Griffin replied, "The greatest moment for me, apart from creating the design, was hearing the positive feedback from the active duty handlers and realizing that I truly have made an impact." Dixie Whitman, MWDTSA President, is delighted with the response from the dog handlers. "The dog handlers very rarely will ever ask for anything for themselves, they are always, first and foremost, concerned with the well-being of their K-9 partners. This shirt is the first thing I've ever had them request for themselves. They love it," she stated. The first 120 shirts were sent as gifts to dog handlers.

As part of the Cherokee county school district's senior project, students are required to work with a project facilitator who is considered knowledgeable in their field. "For me, when I chose to work with this type of organization, Dixie was a logical choice. Not only is she a wonderful person, she is a great role model. Not many people have the determination to actively pursue something they are so passionate about." Courtney spends her days volunteering at a local vet clinic, working on homework, and supporting military working dog teams in Iraq and Afghanistan. Slated to attend Mississippi State University in fall 2010, she plans to major in Biochemistry with a Pre-Vet concentration.

Military working dogs are most commonly German Shepherds, Labrador Retrievers, and Belgian Malinois, all breeds which display superior intelligence, stamina, and a willingness to work. Each dog must endure an intensive training program at Lackland Air Force Base before being paired with a handler and deployed. An average MWD may serve up to 10 years before retiring. Not many people realize that without the contributions of these amazing animals we would be hard pressed to clear Afghanistan of land mines and search out hidden weapon caches in Baghdad. The dogs are exposed to the same extreme conditions and inherent dangers that human soldiers are exposed to, and they deserve the same support. For more information and to purchase a shirt (T-shirts in tan or royal blue at \$24.95 and hoodies in royal blue only at \$39.95), please visit www.mwdtsa.org 100% of the profits go to troops down range.



Courtney Griffin

379th ESFS – Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar

Thank you to everyone who ordered Shirts and Coins to support the 379th fundraiser. Mike Diercks has informed me that we “sold them out”! Way to go guys for supporting this effort. Thank you again Mike for taking the lead on this project.

Phil Carroll Retirement Donations

First and foremost, congratulations to Phil Carroll who retired from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on January 1, 2010 after 34 1/2 years of Federal service with that agency, the Bureau of Land Management and the Air Force. Phil asked that in lieu of presents for his retirement ceremony that a donation be made to Old Dawgs & Pups. His co-workers and friends saw fit to make a very generous donation of \$455.00 in his name to our program. So, it just goes to show you – Phil’s heart is always supporting OD&P. Again, congratulations on your retirement and thanks again for your continuing support for the deployed MWD teams that are serving down range.

Old Dawg Deployed to Afghanistan

Hugo Nunez, who we will now refer to as MSgt Hugo Nunez, is a reservist who is assigned to the 19th Security Forces Squadron, Little Rock AFB, Arkansas. Hugo joined our program last year and supported a deployed dog team in Iraq. He is now serving at FOB Sharana, Afghanistan. Hugo is working as the NCOIC of Law Operations. To quote the Master Sergeant “I was fortunate when I was activated after 9/11 I was offered and worked a Patrol/Narcotic Dog for about 18 months. It was great then I had a 5 year hiatus from K9 until Customs (my civilian employer) decided to FINALLY put my previous K9 experience to use. I trained and worked a Narcotics dog for approximately a year then I volunteered for my current endeavor.

Of course, as soon as he was settled, we sent him a Leatherman Surge and here’s what we heard back from Hugo. “I am honored and I thank you very much. When I attended Patrol Dog School in 1988 I had the good fortune to receive the majority of my Patrol Dog Training from 2 Vietnam/SEA veterans. You guys laid the foundation for those of us that came behind you. I also had the good fortune to have a kennel master at Tyndall Air Force Base from 1990 to 1993 that had served at Phan Rang and DaNang (MSgt. Mike Myers). Some of my best K9 memories are of "Humping the perimeter" at Osan Air Base in Korea. Nothing like Thailand/Vietnam but it was still great to feel like my dog and I were true "Guardians of the night".

“Thanks again!!! WOW!!!! I am humbled. I have owned different variants of the "Leatherman" brand tool since the first Gulf War but, none as useful as this one. I literally sat and played with it for about an hour. Thank you and the Old Dawgs!”

Honoring “Ffella” – 9th Security Forces, Beale AFB, California

Many of you have seen this photograph; it’s one that I think sums up the conditions that our deployed handles handle each and every day during their deployments. SSgt Jeff Mastin and MWD Fella could attest that Joint Base Balad was not a “day at the beach”.



The team returned to Beale AFB, California and Jeff headed off for some well deserved leave. Ffella did the same and took some down time at the Beale MWD Kennel. Unfortunately, Ffella was found lifeless in his kennel. As you might imagine, everyone was just destroyed by this tragic event.

Ffella was recognized for his service and his numerous deployments as the Wing Commander ordered the United States flag to be flown at half staff during the memorial services held on November 25, 2009. What a class act sir and we salute you!

Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Mastin, 9th Security Forces Squadron, salutes the memorial of Ffella, a military working dog who passed away recently. The 9th SFS held a service at Heritage Park Nov. 25 for the fallen K-9.



Beale's Honor Guard folds a flag Nov. 25 at the memorial service for "Ffella" a military working dog who recently passed away. Members of the 9th Security Forces Squadron honored the fallen with a service at Heritage Park. (Photographs by T.C. Perkins, Jr.) Jeff and Ffella were supported by Mike Clunis (Safeside) during this deployment and by Gordon Johnston (Takhli) and Janet Wise (FoK9) during their deployment at the 407th ESFS, Ali Airbase Iraq in 2005.

Jeff, our hearts go out to you for the loss of Ffella – he will always be a hero in our hearts!

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

At the time of this report we have **35** members of the "Old Dawgs & Pups" program actively supporting **34** handlers assigned to nine (9) 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 **1,079** pieces of equipment has been delivered to our K-9 troops serving in the AOR from August 21, 2005 to January 15, 2010. Over **220** "Old Dawgs and Friends" have supported **204** 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 **\$12,551.00** of supplies for the **44** kennels solely via your personal donations. Including the Leatherman corporate and Helping Udders donations, the total is **\$43,233.00!**

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

- 192 Leatherman "Surge" Tools (125) Donated by Leatherman) *
- * The Leatherman "Surge"/Flashlights/Knives donation is valued at approximately **\$27,909.00**
- 75 Thailand Challenge Coins (Donated & Purchased)
- 75 Guardian Pet Beds (Pet Edge)
- 75 * Leatherman Knives (Models: c33T, e55, e55B, e33L)
- 52 Kongs (Assorted sizes)
- 45 * Leatherman Serac S3 Leatherman Flashlights
- 40 Sponges
- 40 Cleaning/Scouring Pads
- 39 Thailand Historical Base Patches
- 30 Kygen Port-A-Bowls (Dressler's)
- 40 PSI Water Holes (Dressler's)
- 24 Kygen 2-In-1 Food/Water Bowls (Dressler's)
- 24 Rolls 26"x78" 20% Dark Limo Window Tint (Checker Auto Supply)
- 22 Doggles (10 Pairs were donated)
- 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 Heavy Guard Handled Water Pails (Dressler's)
- 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
5	Set of four Ruff Wear Bark'n Boots Grip Trex (Ray Allen)
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
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)

*** If you receive more than one copy – It's a data base thing!**