

# 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



(03/15/2013)

**OVER SEVEN YEARS OF SUPPORTING OUR K-9 TROOPS!  
MORE THAN 350 MILITARY WORKING DOG TEAMS SUPPORTED!**

**More than \$80,300 of supplies shipped down range!**

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

Hello everyone! We are currently supporting six (6) kennels and fifteen (15) deployed Air Force, Army, and Navy teams as of March 15, 2013. March 2013 brings us to seven years and six 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 Bagram Air Field and FOB Masum Ghar, Afghanistan; Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar; and Eskan Village, Saudi Arabia. We have two (2) new Pups to introduce this month.

### **Pups heading home from the AOR**

**Ma'sum Ghar, Afghanistan:** SSgt Billy Taulbee & MWD Arko are should be pulling chocks and heading back to Eglin AFB, Florida. That Florida weather is going to be a welcome site for this team.

SSgt Travis Dulworth & MWD Dyngo should be packing to catch that "freedom bird" and hopefully they will be stateside back at Luke AFB, Arizona, by the time this newsletter hits the street.

**Eskan Village, Saudi Arabia:** SSgt Alexandra Jecha & MWD Dexter are getting ready to head back to the "world" and Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona. They are heading for some warm desert weather!

SSgt Daniel Sayarot & Figo should be following SSgt Jecha back to the desert and the 355<sup>th</sup> SFS at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona.

### **Pups arriving in the AOR**

**Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan:** TSgt Adam Leslie, Trainer, deployed from the 633<sup>rd</sup> SFS, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia. He is supported by MSgt Jason Somers.

**Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar:** SrA Jared Phillips & MWD Rex are deployed from the 28<sup>th</sup> SFS, Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota. They are supported by Doc Hodges (Ubon/Korat).

## 379<sup>th</sup> ESFS – Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar



SSgt Melissa Schmalhorst & MWD Bety take a moment as they prepare for a training session at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. What a calm and collected team. Look at that face – you’d like to have a pup out of that litter wouldn’t you? But wait - once Bety is released – there is no way out. There is just no quit in this dog! Just another day in “a suit” for SrA Brad Ditch. There are days when things just don’t go right.



Bety makes another move on SrA Ditch – “Curses – missed him”. As you can see, in the end Bety wins the battle. We’re going to have to ask Chad about that look on his face in the bottom right photograph?

SSgt Melissa Schmalhorst & MWD are deployed from the 92<sup>nd</sup> SFS, Fairchild AFB, Washington and SrA Chad Ditch is deployed from 22<sup>nd</sup> SFS, McConnell AFB, Kansas. They are supported by Steve and Lise Gattis (CRB) and J. D. Jones (Udorn), respectively.

## 379<sup>th</sup> ESFS – Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar – Continued

### Woman’s History Month Expo at Al Udeid



SrA Candace Colburn and MWD Eddy were recognized as part of Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron “Team” during Woman’s History Month Expo at Al Udeid Air Base. Below SrA Colburn and her Vehicle Search Area (VSA) teammates stand up as one of the teams that secures the base. Left to right, A1C Madeline Edwards, SrA Racheal Rideout, SrA Candace Colburn and MWD Eddy, A1C Alexandra Litsey, and TSgt Angela Miranda. Way to go ladies – we know they are in good hands!



Our newest troop at Al Udeid Air Base is SSgt Thomas Beers. In the photograph above, is Tom’s wife Sarah, and MWD Guyro at the airport before they started their first deployment together. SSgt Beers is deployed from the 21<sup>st</sup> SFS, Peterson AFB, Colorado and the team is supported by John Langley (TSN).



## 455<sup>th</sup> ESFS Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan



SSgt Joshua Mason & MWD Ruth visit with Lt. Col. John Grimm, 455 ESFG Deputy Commander, Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, for a little “intell” and some rare “face time”. Good deal Sarge! It’s always a good thing to get to know the commanders! You never know when it’s going to come in handy.

SSgt Mason & MWD Ruth are deployed from the 88<sup>th</sup> SFS, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio and the team is supported by Bob Curnick (NKP). This is Ruth’s second tour with OD&P. She deployed to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, in January 2012 with SSgt Kieran Gibson. Many of you may have met Ruth during the VSPA reunion at Dayton, Ohio in 2011.



SSgt Joshua Mason & MWD Ruth take on SSgt Steven Owen during a training exercise at BAF. Ruth is no stranger to snow, so it sure didn’t interfere with this training. During the above two photographs, MWD Ruth gets up close and personal and she certainly seems to be enjoying the afternoon on her terms.

Afghanistan winters are known to be brutal but our troops have adjusted very well. Aggression training certainly seems to warm up the atmosphere just like it did during our tours. Looks like someone better tell that Airman in the rear of the photograph that it’s cold!

SSgt Owens is deployed from the 55<sup>th</sup> SFS, Offutt AFB, Nebraska and he is teamed with MWD Tex. This is team’s first deployment with OD&P and Karl Niemeyer (NKP) supports them.

## 455<sup>th</sup> ESFS Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan - Continued



**Top Left:** SSgt Joshua Mason & MWD Ruth take another “bite” as they continued their training.

**Top Right:** We’ve been supporting Camp Kujo since it was built in May of 2009 under the direction of Kennel Master TSgt Andrew O’Dell. Yep, that’s the trench for installing “running water” for the first time since the kennels were built. Kennel Master, TSgt Micheal McKinnon, sure is glad that this “little CE” project is underway. Maybe that trip to the Deputy Commander’s office by SSgt Mason and MWD Ruth kick started the project – Who knows? Congratulation guys – you’ve come a long way!

## 64<sup>th</sup> ESFS - Eskan Village, Saudi Arabia



**Just not sure who is the best-looking one here?** So far, it looks like the Figo is leading the vote count! SSgt Daniel Sayarot and MWD Figo, “Team Cool”, are deployed from the 355<sup>th</sup> SFS, Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona. Jon Hemp (TSN) supports the team.



## FOB Ma'sum Ghar, Afghanistan



### Army Commendation Medals and Combat Action Badges

Top Left - MWD Dyngo, assigned to SSgt Travis Dulworth and MWD Dyngo and SSgt Billy Taulbee and MWD Arko were recently recognized for their accomplishment during their tour at FOB Ma'sum Ghar, Afghanistan. Both Air Force MWD teams were awarded the "Army Commendation Medal and Combat Action Badges". They were supported by J. D. Jones (Udorn) and Ken Smerecki (U-Tapao/Pleiku). Both teams should be stateside by the time this edition is published. Great job guys, great job!

### Other News of Interest

#### 60 Minutes visits Yuma Proving Ground – Check local listings for times

The CBS crew says the program will air before the conclusion of the 60 Minutes broadcast season in mid-May, probably on Sunday, April 14. The viewing audience will range between ten and 15 million people. The entire segment will last 12 minutes, with the YPG portion about one-third of that.

Longtime 60 Minutes Reporter Lara Logan headed the crew. A veteran of multiple visits, some lasting months, to Afghanistan and Iraq, she was assaulted by a mob two years ago while covering political unrest in Cairo, Egypt. The culmination of the YPG visit was a detailed interview conducted by Logan with course instructor Gunnery Sergeant Chris Knight, a man recognized as a dog-training expert throughout the military working dog world. Some call him the "dog whisperer."

Read more: <http://www.yumasun.com/articles/training-85374-dogs-crew.html#ixzz2Lfz6o4f>

## Colonel John Probst Retiring

Colonel John Probst will be retiring on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013, after completing a career of 37 years, 11 months, and 17 days! Our “Colonel” or as we have known him over the years – Military Working Dog handler, A1C John John Probst (circa 1970-1981). Colonel Probst started his military career as an enlisted troop and a Military Working Dog handler serving with a canine partner at Goose Bay, Labrador (New Foundland, Canada), Fairchild AFB, Washington, Clark AFB, RPI, and Don Maung, Thailand, and later was the Commander, 341<sup>st</sup> Training Squadron (MWD School), Lackland AFB, Texas. From March 2007-2008 he also served a tour in Iraq.

Colonel Probst related his K-9 beginnings in an article for our “Dog School Newsletter”. I had just finished watching a dog demo, walked by “Nemo’s” run and sat back down on the bleachers. It could have been the warm San Antonio afternoon that made me loose my bearings but in reality it was the stunning speed and power of the dogs hitting the wrap and the sight of a true Vietnam War hero that probably did it. Suddenly the SSgt yelled, “Hey Airman, put your arm down, get down here and sign this roster now.” What arm ... what roster and two months later I was starting training as a military working dog handler. Whew ... and life has never been the same ... and I damned proud of it too! Hundreds of names and memories come flooding back in no specific order as I reflect on the past 30 plus years.

Colonel Probst has stated, “Some of the best and most important lessons in life I learned from my assigned dogs. They taught me the value loyalty, the strength in focusing on a target, what you could accomplish with hard work, to be humble, the power of pride, when and how to relax, and maybe most importantly ... to just be yourself and nothing more. They each derived a simple joy and happiness from being with us ... they were our best friend and most loyal protector. Each of them was so unique and so memorable: Diablo #79M8, who decided after six months, yeah I’m going to bite this handler just because I can; Thunder #999A, God Bless him would fall asleep if we stood still for more than five minutes; Baron #886X, with broken canines who loved to carry his water bucket around; Sultan #S246, who would have made a better house pet but he at least tried; Victor #013A, who was handsome and forever energetic; Shep #80M3, who hated everyone equally and had no favorites; Rebel #8M12, always wanted to please his handler no matter the chore; Jalk #Z012, who was an “Aberdeen super-dog” and had only one speed ... extremely fast; and, last, Bushka #C249, who got a bad reputation but just needed a chance to prove himself and enjoy someone as goofy as he was. What a wonderful group of characters and friends ... they made my first ten years rich and full and I can never forget any one of them”.

Unless someone can prove differently, it is believed that Colonel Probst is the “last serving active duty Sentry Dog handler” from the Vietnam era. How’s that for a fantastic run? Colonel you make us really proud. Ernest Childers, Udorn (1970-71) will be representing our Military Working Dog Handlers groups at Colonel Probst’s retirement ceremony. So we will have a follow up story in next month’s edition. Thanks you Colonel for representing all of us during your career.



## Other News concerning OD&P Graduates

### Senior Master Sergeant Promotion – Our first “OD&P” SMSgt!



TSgt Matt Rebolz – Ali Air Base, Iraq – 2005

TSgt Rebolz & MWD Ori – Mosul, Iraq – 2006

It is our great pleasure to announce that MSgt Matt Rebolz has been selected for promotion to Senior Master Sergeant! “Reb” was our first OD&P Kennel Master at Ali Air Base, Iraq in August 2005. Matt was supported by Ben Cox (TSN/U-Tapao) and Don Graham (Tuy Hoa/Loring). Reb also deployed again with OD&P in August of 2006 with his partner Ori (S132) when the pair served at LSA Diamondback, Mosul, Iraq. Reb was supported by Rick Matott (Ubon) and Marie Zeak (FoK). MSgt Rebolz is currently serving at Kirkland AFB, New Mexico. Congratulations Reb from all of us at Old Dawgs & Pups. We’re all looking forward to seeing you make CHIEF!

### TSgt Justin Kitts and the Wolves

We just received this report from TSgt Justin Kitts. “The USAF Academy K-9 section and myself were invited to go play with wolves for a day. It was a dream come true for most dog handlers!!! Mark "Wolf" Johnson founder of Rocky Mountain Wildlife Foundation gave us a state of the art tour of his facility. We spent over three hours playing with wolves and some wolf/hybrids. It was awesome watching them interact amongst each other. We got to witness a challenge session between an Alpha and another Wolf in the pack that wants to be the Alpha. The body language they used was cool to watch. We got to witness them eat some butchered up horse meat. It was amazing watching them carry pieces of meat in their mouths and shake their heads back in fourth. I know we have all seen K-9s do that with a sleeve. This was truly a dream come true for all of us. Oh, and as far as being scared, NOT one bit!!!

Here’s a little about The Rocky Mountain Wildlife Foundation <http://www.rmwf.org/index.html>

Rocky Mountain Wildlife Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of all those who came before us. They Rescue wolves and wolf/hybrids. If you go to their website you can learn a lot more and you can even donate some money. Mark was telling us when we where there that he plans on added some more enclosures this summer. We where invited to come spend a weekend out there camping out, playing with the wolves, volunteering and drinking at night!!!”

Another of our pups, SSgt Phillip Mendoza, along with TSgt Derek Copeland, and SSgt Robert Whaley made the trip to the Wildlife Foundation.

Thank you Justin for this great article and it is great hearing from you and Dozer. See photographs of the journey on the next page.



**Other News concerning OD&P Graduates**  
**TSgt Justin Kitts and the Wolves - Continued**



**TSgt Justin Kitts gets up-close and gets a “smooch” from one of the wolves – WOW what an experience!**



**SSgt Phillip Mendoza takes this turn bonding with members of the pack. It’s not hard to tell that our guys had a great time during this little “nature hike”. WOW – This is just fantastic!**

## Feed the Dawgs Project 2013 Schedule

<http://www.thedawgsproject.com>



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. 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](mailto:jmhemp@feedthedawgs.com)

Here is the Feed the Dawgs upcoming schedule for 2013 – Get Involved!

You can view photos from all of our events on Facebook at "[The Dawgs Project](#)"

9	March	MCAS Miramar, CNRSW/San Diego, MCRD San Diego, CA – U S Coast Guard
23	March	USMC Sgt Christopher Diaz Feed the Dawgs Event, Fort Bliss, TX
24	March	USMC Sgt Christopher Diaz Memorial IRON DOG SOUTH, Fort Bliss, TX
13	April	Yuma Proving Grounds/MCAS Yuma, AZ

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

At the time of this report we have **14** members of the "Old Dawgs & Pups" program actively supporting **15** handlers assigned to six (6) 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 **1,752** pieces of equipment has been delivered to our K-9 troops serving in the AOR from August 21, 2005 to March 15, 2013. "Old Dawgs and Friends" have supported **96** kennels and **354** K-9 personnel via our program. For additional information on the program please go to:

[http://www.pbase.com/635thk9/old\\_dawgs](http://www.pbase.com/635thk9/old_dawgs)

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

We have purchased and shipped **\$22,221.00** of supplies for the **96** kennels solely via your personal donations. Including the Leatherman corporate and Helping Udders donations, the total is **\$80,349.00**

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.

## List of Supplies Shipped by Old Dawgs & Pups

- 294 Leatherman “Surge” Tools (145) Donated by Leatherman)
  - \* The Leatherman “Surge”/Muts/Flashlights/Knives donation is valued at approximately **\$54,709.00**
- 266 Thailand Challenge Coins (Donated & Purchased)
- 205 Thailand Historical Base Patches
- 163 \* Leatherman Serac S3 Leatherman Flashlights
- 101 Guardian Pet Beds (Pet Edge)
- 75 \* Leatherman Knives (Models: c33T, e55, e55B, e33L)
- 56 Kongs (Assorted sizes)
- 50 \* Leatherman M5 LED Lenser Flashlights
- 46 Sponges
- 44 PSI Water Holes
- 40 Cleaning/Scouring Pads
- 34 \* Leatherman MUT Tools
- 33 Kygen Port-A-Bowls
- 25 Doggles (10 Pairs were donated)
- 24 Kygen 2-In-1 Food/Water Bowls
- 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 -Value \$3,420.00**)
- 16 Coastal Medium Firm Shedding Blades
- 16 Classic Long Tooth Undercoat rakes
- 15 Classic HG Food Dishes
- 12 Coastal Large Slickers
- 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
- 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 lb)
- 8 Cooling Wraps (Roshgo Corp)
- 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
- 7 Sets Ruff Wear Bark’n Boots Trex (Ray Allen & Ruff Wear)
- 7 Retractable Leashes
- 4 Carabiners
- 4 5” Heavy Duty Cleaning Brushes
- 3 100 Foot Water Hoses
- 3 20” Heavy Duty Cleaning Brushes
- 3 12” 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)