



The Paw Print

The Voice of the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum

& Handler Center



Volume 2 Issue 3

March 2022

Special points of interest:

- We celebrate the accomplishment of female handlers during Military Women's History Month with a profile of who we think is the first female with the K9 MOS.
- This month honors K9 Veterans Day with words and images.

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Celebrating Military Women's History Month



U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Jenna L. Cauble, dog handler, poses for a silhouette photograph with her Military Working Dog (MWD) Ken on MCAS Yuma, Jan. 18, 2019. MWDs are trained to subdue or intimidate suspects before using lethal force; they are also used to detect explosives, narcotics, and other harmful materials. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Allison Lotz)

In our inaugural issue of *The Paw Print*, our first article highlighted the dedication ceremony for the sculpture "The Pledge." The memorial honors female military K9 handlers.

One of those handlers, Renae Johnson, shared her story in our first issue. "I was 18 years old the first time I saw an MWD team. I was in Panama's rain forests conducting jungle surveillance as a Private First

Class in the Missouri National Guard. From that moment, I knew there was nothing else in this world I wanted to be. From that first meeting, my life and goals changed trajectory."

While females remain in the minority as dog handlers, they are increasing their presence as Kennel Masters, Training NCOs, and even moving into the Army MWD Program Man-

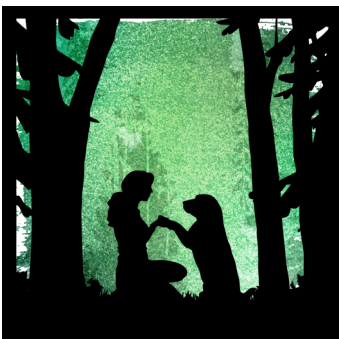
ager slot. Their talents and devotion to the MWD program enhance and strengthen the program.

We are delighted to showcase female handlers in this issue, and we hope you will buckle up and enjoy our discovery of the handler we believe to be the first-ever female dog handler.

From the President's Desk



President, Albert Johnson



On March 13th, we celebrate K9 Veterans Day. It is crazy to think that on this day in 1942, the Army established the K9 Corps. The program is looking pretty good for being 80 years old. The nation sets aside the day to honor those four-legged partners that taught us so much. These are the partners that always kept us safe when the tides could have turned so quickly, not in our favor. These dogs showed us a loyalty that no other relationships could ever match.

This and every K9 Veterans Day, I take the time to share the stories of all the MWDs I had the honor of being partnered with, those K9s that kept handlers I knew safe, and those heroic dogs that paved the way for the newest generation of working dogs. The legacy of these valiant messenger dogs in WWII to sentry dogs in Korea and Vietnam to combat tracker dogs in Iraq will continue because dogs will always be an integral part of the mission.

I owe my life to two dogs I handled, the first being a Lackland Air Force trained Specialized Search Dog Rexi J295, who kept me safe on my first deployment, finding caches of weapons and ordinance like a pro. The second K9 I

owe my life to was a grumpy Israeli-trained Specialized Search Dog named Johnny F728. This incredible dog found IEDs, bad guys who were actively trying to hurt our team, and he could throw more attitude than I could ever describe in just a few words. These devoted partners may not have had the choice whether to serve our country, but they did it faithfully for only the bond and love of the handler on the less intelligent end of the leash. To the dogs!

March brings us Women's History Month as well. Contributions made by women in the United States military date back centuries before, to the American Revolutionary War. Women cared for wounded Soldiers and even helped spy for the Army. The formation of the Women's Corps in various branches of the military in World War II integrated women into today's fighting force. Women no longer hold jobs in just the typing pools and hospital wards. They serve side-by-side with their male counterparts in nearly every field. I had the great honor of serving alongside quite a few fantastic female handlers. Their determination to be seen as equals in K9 and utilized in combat is inspirational. These incredible

women strive to increase their numbers and positions in the Military K9 field at every level.

That purposeful drive is something our organization will continue to honor. We can't wait to interview more female handlers. One of our newsletter staff, Dixie Whitman, spent hours researching and double-checking records. We believe she may have identified the first female K9 handler in the military. Her research yielded an incredible story which you will read about in this issue. That handler's determination and skill are recognized in women across the K9 field. Many thanks to her family for sharing some photos and stories with us. This history is priceless.

Included in this issue, you will also see an article from a Soldier who has worked her way up to being an integral part of decision-making for the Army's modern MWD program. Enjoy this edition of our newsletter and, as always,

K9 Leads the Way!

Albert Johnson

The First Dogwoman

The dissonant barking of dogs bounced sharply off the kennel's cement block walls and echoed in Carol Roever's ears, even as she locked the enclosure gate behind her. Finally, she plopped down with her best friends, Lois and Anne, to recalibrate their lives.

A year earlier, in 1942, all three gained employment at the Seeing Eye Dog School in Morristown, NJ, as apprentice trainers. With experienced young men shipping off to military service, females stepped in to take on traditional male roles and ensure that America's vision-impaired population had access to guide dogs. Yet, critics of women training dogs rolled their collective eyes. The three young ladies exhausted themselves with endless kennel care: scooping poop and mixing kibble. They were never actually allowed to do their job, to train. With her extensive canine experience at two prestigious East Coast breeding kennels and a year at the Seeing Eye, she recognized it was time to move to Plan B

Carol never lacked self-confidence. As a child, she chose lion tamer as her future calling. Her grit had grit. With this fearlessness, she embarked on a new career in the Women's Army Corps (WAC), lured by her recruiter's word that she could become a dog handler. During Basic Training, she

learned that the recruiter's promise fell short. The MOS of Dog Handler didn't extend to females. Plan C? The Motor Pool.

After mastering her new skill set, her first assignment took her to Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, where the 3rd and 5th Armored Divisions readied for deployment to Europe.

Upon learning that she'd been a trumpeter in her high school band, Carol received the additional tasks of blowing *Reveille* in the WAC barracks and *Taps* at area funerals for returning war dead. She recalled coming back from funerals with the team late into the night, stuffed full of Pennsylvania Dutch cooking, with "one of the G.I.s tooting my bugle out of the window of the vehicle...but at least they weren't firing the rifles!"

Unwilling to give up easily, Carol requested a transfer to K9 at every possible opportunity. Finally, she learned that the Venn diagram of her dream life: Army and K9 Corps were about to intersect at Fort Robinson. A new WAC Detachment received approvals for the Nebraska installation.

Arriving at this historic wild west fort at Nebraska's northwest range proved eye-opening to a young woman from the refined East. The land stretched open and proud as far as she could see, and all of it seemed

by Dixie Whitman - Reference Dog News Magazine



Carol Roever holding one of the collies who served as an MWD in WWII at Fort Robinson, Nebraska in 1945.
Photo courtesy of Nebraska History. www.history.nebraska.gov



Carol with some of her charges at Fort Robinson, Nebraska.
Photo courtesy of the Carol Roever Simonds family.

filled with fabulous Army animals: 8,000 horses, 10,000 mules, and, most exciting, 1,000 dogs.

At Fort Robinson, Carol ran into old associates, such as the WAC CO, Lt. Dorothy Davis, a friend from the Eastern dog show circuit. In addition, Officer's Row, near the WAC Barracks, housed Captain and Mrs. (Major and Bea) Godsol with their Landseer Newfies. Cpt. Godsol headed Fort Robinson's K9 Corps. Many of the men in his unit were accomplished handlers from her dog show world. She felt that she "had landed right in the middle of a who's who of the greatest dog men possible."

Carol's Motor Pool access allowed her to transport the men and dogs to the training grounds and remain with them during the day as they transitioned the dogs into Sentry, Scout, and Messenger K9s. Occasionally, the men asked Carol to hold or walk their dogs.

Soon some of the men in the unit allowed her to join in on the dog training. "I distinctly remember the man in the padded suit yelling, 'Roever, hang on to that dog!'"

Carol, clearly with a natural affinity for dog training, schmoozed her way into an official transfer. She moved to the K9 Unit, complete with the MOS of Dog Trainer 458, along with the rank of Sergeant.

She received an assignment to the De-Agitation Program. In this unit, veteran war dogs returning from service and headed back to their families received specialized training to smooth out their rough edges. Handlers played with the dogs, taught them new games, and passed them around to others to make them less reactive. Carol felt that the dogs that arrived emotionally sound did quite well in their rehabilitation.

At the end of her duty, she returned to New Jersey, but by 1949 received a call from one of her Ft. Robinson cohorts to move to California and take on the role of Kennel Manager at Guide Dogs for the Blind. Her trip westward with her Corgi co-pilot in a 1939 butter yellow Mercury convertible proved a challenge. Her car's engine demanded oil every 150 miles, and as she pulled into the parking lot of the Guide Dog School, her radiator hissed its demise, and her battery died, but they'd made it.

Carol stayed at Guide Dogs through marriage and children, retiring in 1988. Even though she died in 2015, her dog legacy continues through the family's kennel, Roverrun.

As far as we can determine, it seems that Carol Roever served as the first and only female K9 Handler in WWII—America's first Dogwoman!



Carol posing in front of one of the Army buildings at Fort Robinson, happy at landing at this post with what she considered the greatest dog men possible. Photo courtesy of the Carol Roever Simonds family.



Carol photographed in her later years having created a lifetime "gone to the dogs." Photo courtesy of the Carol Roever Simonds family.

K9 Veterans Day

by Curtis Hendel

PTRN: (Person to remain nameless): "I still don't get it; makes no sense at all."

Me: "Dude, I just don't know why you don't get it."

PTRN: "I get it that they were cool, and you got to be cool with them, but they were just dogs."

Me: "No, they weren't just dogs...."

PTRN: "My uncle had a German Police Dog; he was cool, too."

Me: "No such breed."

PTRN: "But really, why do you think you need a K9 Veterans Day? You guys have Veterans Day in November."

Me: "K9 Veterans Day is to remember all of the dogs that served, not the humans that served with them."

PTRN: "I don't get it."

I hate to admit it, but yes, there are humans and even fellow veterans that just can't grasp the concept of K9 Veterans Day. To them, a dog is a pretty talented, four-legged critter that is not that different from the pet they had as kids. Or they say that dogs can't understand being honored, so why do it? It can certainly be frustrating.

The average human/dog relationship is as special and unique as any relationship out there. The problem

is that, even in a pet situation, the closest of human/dog relationships is still not even in the same ballpark as the relationship between a Military Working Dog Handler and their Military Working Dog.

These are some reasons why K9 Veterans Day makes perfect sense to any of us that held the dumb end of the leash. We, as handlers and trainers, indeed were in command of some pretty incredible skills. Not every guy or girl out there could run a dog through a controlled aggression sequence or lead the search for a bomb or illicit drugs. Fewer yet could play the decoy to a Dutch Shepherd who earned the title "typewriter" without getting a few extra holes in their skin.

Yes, as handlers and trainers of these magnificent Military Working Dogs we were issued a level of "cool" that few could claim. Not even a commissioned officer carrying the nuke codes received as many glowing glances as a beautiful German shepherd, Rottweiler, Belgian Malinois, or other working dogs.

Indeed, we were in control of our dog (most of the time) and issued strong-voiced commands that the dog carried out (almost all of the time), and we even



"I purchased this small statue at Lackland AFB in 1988, my bride had this memorial bracelet made to honor my main dog at Osan, Ero. Never Forgotten." ~ Curtis Hendel. Photo courtesy Curtis Hendel.

completed these tasks looking cool.

But don't kid yourself, as calm and in command as you or I were when we held that leash; it was all the dog. Of course, our dogs needed humans to provide for their basic needs, but when it came to the big job of finding drugs or bombs or finding and neutralizing the bad guys, it was all the dogs.

For two years in Korea, I would guess that I spent more time with my dog than with humans. I am sure this pattern held for many handlers in the field. And on those wicked dark nights

when the two Koreas rattled their sabers at each other, providence provided a partner that could see, hear, and smell what I couldn't.

Since most of these dogs are no longer on this earth, the more obtuse ask, "Why celebrate K9 Veterans Day?" We have it because of the grunts on the island of Guam. The Doberman Pinschers that led them crippled the ability of the Japanese to hide from American forces, saving hundreds from either being maimed or killed. We have it for the Soldiers and Marines in the jungles of Vietnam that felt fortunate to

On K9 Veterans Day, please join with all of us here at Military Working Dog Heritage Museum to honor and remember the heroic K9s who have served in the military.

NATIONAL K-9 VETERANS' DAY MARCH 13TH



"The appearance of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement."

have the K9 team on point. And in our modern war, we have Military Working Dogs out front detecting all kinds of IEDs and saving countless lives along the way.

As dog men and women, many of us remember one or more of our K9 partners that left a mark on our hearts and souls the last time we saw them. My bride and I have a "part-time" puppies, a Boston Terrier (aka Boston Terrorist or Boston Malinois) that spends about half of her time with us. She officially belongs to our eldest son but stays with my wife while she works out of the house during the day and spends time with us instead of staying alone if our son is gone. Indie is in the top 5% of most spoiled

dogs globally. She has also given my bride unconditional love and support during her now 11 month battle with long-term COVID.

Recently while sitting in her chair with Indie sleeping soundly on her lap, Caroline looked at me and asked a simple question, "Was it like this for you?" I was caught off guard and didn't get what she was asking. "What are you talking about?" I asked. "Was your love for Ero the same as my love for this little puppies?"

That heartfelt and straightforward question is the very reason we have K9 Veterans Day. I answered my wife carefully. "It was not even comparable. All three of my field dogs, especially Ero, gave me the same

love, care, laughs, and emotional support as Indie gives you, and I loved them back completely and unconditionally. But that was just the tip of the iceberg. Our dogs were our responsibility, our best friends, and our lifeline. They would have sacrificed themselves at any moment that danger presented itself to us. They were our partners and were never a piece of equipment."

Most of us dog handlers, from old to young, have given a part of our very soul to at least one dog during our service. I still grieve for a dog that I "left behind" when I left South Korea and returned to the United States. Did I abandon Ero? No, I didn't. It was what we did and how we did it. Dur-

ing our 18 months together, I rarely missed going in on an off day to take him out. But do I feel, to this day, that I should have stayed another year?

So on K9 Veterans Day, we have a day to remember and honor all dogs that served in such a noble and heroic role. We will also recollect "that dog," the dog that took more than just a little piece of your heart and soul and the dog that you miss to this day.

And yeah, as I finish this piece, my allergies are acting up.

"I will always miss my dogs..."

"Never Above You, Never Below You, Always Beside You!"

The Rescue at Cathedral Valley

by Dixie Whitman

The Aleutian Islands appear on the map as if a giant hand grabbed the end of the Alaska Peninsula and pulled it across the Bering Sea, creating a stunning archipelago of volcanic islands. Alaska's size means those isles furthest west lie more than 1,000 miles from Anchorage.

Six months following Pearl Harbor, the Japanese attacked and set up garrisons on two islands in the western-most Aleutians. Fearing this advance would permit Japanese forces near enough for bombing missions over northwest cities, like Seattle and perhaps as far south as San Francisco, Americans battled back.

By August 1943, the Americans once again planted their flag on the two disputed islands and set up bases intended to protect the northern edge from Japan. One of those remote bases, Fort Randall, included a hub of military activity on the shores of Cold Bay, Alaska.

Approaching that hub on March 18, 1945, a Douglas C-47 carrying four military crew members and two passengers clipped a precipice from the nearby Mount Pavlov. The plane crashed into Cathedral Valley, a remote and hostile environment. This wreck initiated a complex and highly choreographed Search and Rescue mission.

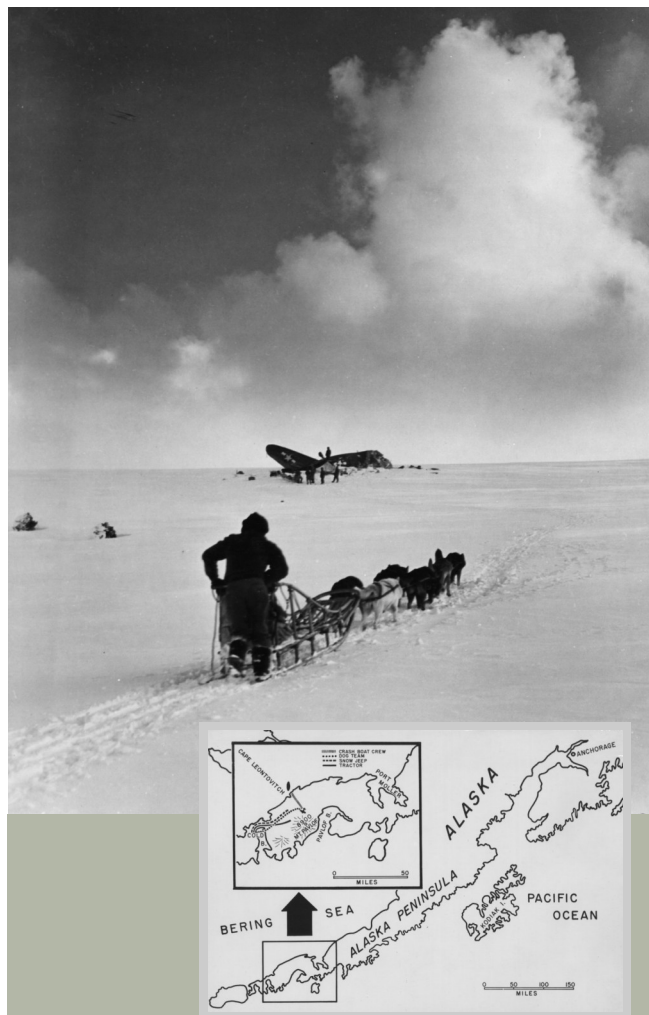
Late that afternoon, a spotter plane from Elmendorf Field, AK, located the wreckage and dropped in supplies. However, the problematic site near the downed aircraft ruled out an immediate extrication.

The next day, three Medics parachuted down to the crash site, jumping from an eastbound plane. They treated the three wounded men and found three more already deceased. The following day, three more men, including a flight surgeon, landed nearby.

To transport the injured men to a hospital required the team to patch together a relay of rescuers. Two dog sled teams with a string of huskies precisely honed for such military rescues mushed the survivors over four inhospitable miles to the closest location a small ski plane could land.

That plane, a Stinson commercial ski plane, plucked from the skies as it flew overhead with civilian passengers, landed as close as it could to ferry the injured to nearby Cold Bay. A hospital plane transferred the patients to Elmendorf Field to receive medical attention. All three survivors recovered.

The strings of huskies and their military mushers continued the legendary status of heroic dogsled teams in the last frontier.



Thirteen Alaskan Huskies composed the two dog teams driven by Alaskan scouts to the Douglas C-47 crash located in Cathedral Valley, Alaska. (Source: NARA)



The survivors reach the bottom of the hill by dog sled. In the foreground is the most seriously injured, Lt. Joseph R. Alexander, pilot, with Lt. Richard L. Cocanour and Sgt. Paul Sundermier. (Source: NARA)

Harold Blom and the Meanest Dog in the Kennel

by Dixie Whitman

A tale of two countries straddles the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) on the Korean Peninsula. To the north of this buffer zone lie poverty, hunger, and fear of government retribution. To the south lie bustling cities, innovation, and freedom. The DMZ, a roughly two-and-a-half-mile wide ribbon of land, weaves 160 miles across this headland slicing South from North Korea. While the zone itself, which roughly meanders along the 38th Parallel, remains demilitarized, heavily fortified opposing armies keep watch just beyond that zone.

Two of those policing the area in 1953, just after the Korean War ended, Harold Blom and his Scout Dog, Fritz, stood guard along with 28 other teams from the 38th Infantry Scout Dog Platoon (ISDP). Drafted during the Korean War, Harold and his high school chum, Harlan Gunnar, along with many other mid-westerners from Iowa, Wisconsin, and their home state of Minnesota, volunteered to become dog handlers at the end of their rigorous Infantry Training at Fort Riley.

From the flat, open, tall-grass prairie lands of Fort Riley, the dog handlers gathered at the new central Army site for training

scout dog teams, Camp Carson, Colorado. There, the sweet, cool air of the Rockies' foothills welcomed them. They studied the available dogs, observing behavior, being swayed by wagging tails, and finally placing their absolute trust in one four-footed friend, they picked their own Scout Dog.

Harold stepped forward and pointed to a kennel holding a growling grey sable German shepherd named Fritz, who carried the reputation as the meanest dog in the kennel. Over several days, unable to get into the enclosure, Harold sat and talked soothingly to Fritz. Finally, the gate squeaked open, and Harold moved into the kennel with leash in hand.

For obedience work, the building blocks of their relationship, they trained with a choke chain. "Sit. Down. Come. Stay." Repetition and reward

As the K9s learned the Scout Dog ropes, they understood that when the handler buckled a harness in place, it meant they were going to work. And their tasks centered around patrolling areas to ensure no incursions occurred. So upon hearing the command "search," the dogs' noses lifted to the air to scout for trouble. After a



Above: Harold sent his parents his official Army photograph.

Below: Harold with Fritz photographed during training at Camp Carson. Photos courtesy of Harold Blom.



few months of training, they headed to Korea.

The troop transport allowed Fritz and other dogs to sail below deck in kennels configured to enable feeding and watering but little exercise. Plowing through the Pacific, the stifling air, along with the constant sway of the bow, caused a wave of K9 seasickness. So the handlers moved the dogs topside to get fresh air until they docked at Pusan, Korea. From there, teams headed north towards the DMZ and a staredown with the standing North Korean Army.

Ultimately, Fritz transformed into a brilliantly performing Scout Dog with impeccable skill and perfect obedience. When Harold led patrols, there were either four or eight men behind him. He didn't mind four men so much but preferred not to have too many armed men walking in his wake. While on patrol, Fritz often wanted to chase into the DMZ after the smells or sounds he discerned coming from the north. With his stealth mode in gear, Fritz never barked. Teams often caught groups of North Koreans trying to slip into South Korea.

"Most people trying to sneak across were living in

horrible circumstances," remembered Harold.

Syngman Rhee, the founding father of the Republic of Korea and the man who served as its first president, decorated all 29 members of the 38th Scout Dog Platoon.

After exactly one year of patrolling the hills of South Korea and staring into the abyss of the DMZ, the 38th ISDP transferred to Tokyo, Japan. Harold's dog Fritz, now a happy tail-wagging buddy, went to Japan to help stem the pilferage of supplies during the years of occupation.

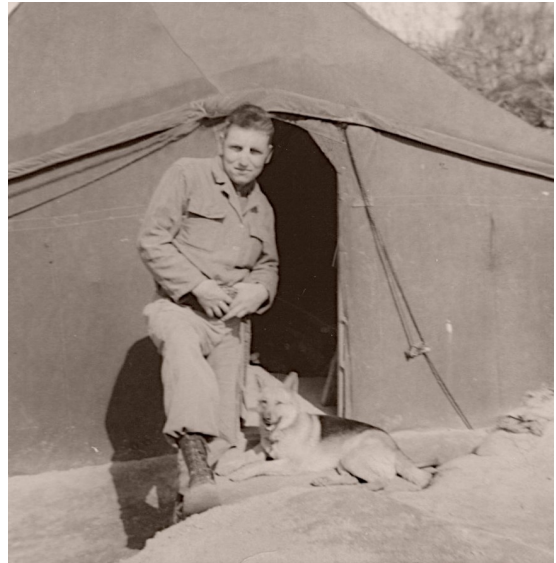
Harold remains proud to have served in the Army and partnered with Fritz, "the meanest dog in the kennel."

"You get close to a dog. You should get to take your dog home." Harold reminds everyone that "Dogs don't live that long."

He is excited to learn that handlers can now adopt their partners at the dog's retirement.

When asked what he would say to Fritz if he were able to talk with him now, Harold quietly said, "I'd give him a kiss on the head and tell him I love him."

That's a dog handler!



Above: Harold and Fritz in Korea. Photos courtesy of Harold Blom.

Below: Harold during our interview.



Female Handlers

Every war has required and depended on the use of K9s, also known as our War Dogs. During the recent War on Terrorism, that requirement has grown exponentially. History is not entirely clear, but we believe women have served our nation in K9 as far back as World War II. Although, during that era, they were not allowed to handle dogs on the front lines. Times have changed tremendously since then.

K9 is a very physically and mentally demanding career field. It also requires a unique personality to be able to bond with the MWD. Women are demonstrating their abilities and proving themselves not just on the home front but also in combat. They perform the rigorous duties of providing installation security as Law Enforcement Officers and force multipliers

to combatant commanders on the battlefield. They conduct route clearance operations to find improvised explosive devices. They assist combat patrols to find and fix the enemy and are always at the kinetic points of operations. These MWD Teams are recognized for their bravery in combat and the countless lives they saved.

They have proven themselves as handlers, Squad Leaders, MWD Trainers/Instructors, Kennel Masters, Detachment Sergeants, First Sergeants, and Program Managers. Over the years, women have demonstrated their competency and serve in key leadership positions across the DoD MWD Program. This is only the beginning; women will continue to perform, set the example, and dominate in K9 for future generations to come.



Story and photos by SGM Viridiana Lavalle



Enjoy these photos of female Army handlers showcasing their training and talents.



Celebrating Female Handlers & Their Achievements

Photo sources: DoD and NARA



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*Military Working Dog
Heritage Museum &
Handler Center
P.O. Box 54
Newport, TN 37822
Phone: 865-507-8903*

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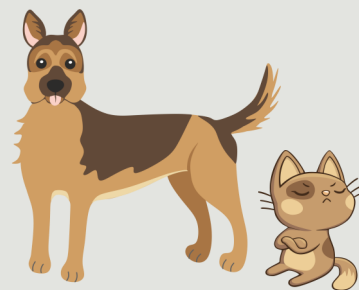
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Important dates with Trooper and Scout

May 13-15 2022 Events at Fort Benning. Hospitality room, War Dog Memorial Rededication, K9 Demonstration, Tours of the National Infantry Museum, Banquet, Auction, and more.

May 16, 2022— MWDHM Fundraiser at Semper Fi Bar and Grille, 9770 Main St, Woodstock, GA 30188 with former War Dog Handlers.

July 17, 2023 – 25th Rededication of the War Dog Memorial at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville .



Historic Pooch Pic of the Month



Left: During WWII. First out, the crash survivors of a wrecked military Douglas C-47 at Cathedral Valley, Alaska, were taken to a commercial plane by dog teams, expertly managed by Cpl. Billy Westahl and Cpl. Wayne O. Markansen of the Alaska Scouts.

Source NARA