



The Paw Print

*The Voice of the Military Working Dog Heritage Museum
& Handler Center*



Upcoming Events:

May 30-31 Knoxville, TN
University of Tennessee
First Responder Event

September 14-21—
Kokomo, IN. All Veterans
Reunion

October 17—
San Antonio, TX. US War
Dogs 25th Anniversary
Celebration

Volume 5 Issue 6

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**CELEBRATING
THE ARMY'S
250TH BIRTHDAY**

Weird Strangers in Nebraska: Army Trainers During WWII



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Above: Black and White Photograph of Bill Wunderlich and Earl Jensen training a dog at Fort Robinson, Nebraska in 1942. Gleaned from Schutzhund training, dogs trained in protection work should understand the differences between friendly, neutral, and dangerous strangers. The "weird stranger" concept has made its way into today's AKC Temperament Testing. Published courtesy History Nebraska Photography Collection, Earl Nills Collection - Collection Code: RG2310.PH 1942. (Photo cropped and some scratches/blemishes edited.)

Starting in August 1942, the Quartermaster Corps set up dog training centers in Front Royal, VA; Fort Robinson, NE; Cat Island (Gulfport), MS; Camp Rimini (Helena), MT; and San Carlos, CA.

The K9 Corps initially accepted thirty-two breeds of dogs for training. However, by 1944, the Army narrowed this list down to

seven breeds: German shepherd dog, Belgian sheepdog, Siberian huskie, collie, Eskimo dog, malamute, and the Doberman pinscher of Marine Corps fame.

After being evaluated by Dogs for Defense, the Army sent approximately 18,000 dogs to the training centers. However, nearly 8,000 of these

donated dogs failed to pass the exams conducted at the centers. Common reasons for disqualification included excitability in response to noise or gunfire, health issues, a poor sense of smell, or an unsuitable temperament.

Check inside for an introduction to one of the first dogmen at Fort Robinson.





President, Albert Johnson

Hello to our fearless readers! I hope your May was a great one. The June Paw Print Newsletter is here!

June brings us the Army's 250th birthday and Father's Day.

While I am not a father, I am a massive fan of dad jokes. You know, the ones I'm talking about, those corny jokes that get groans from the rest of the family when you tell them. Well, I have a couple to share with you. Aren't you in luck? Haha-ha.

WARNING!

**DAD JOKE
LOADING...**



Here are my top 5 dad jokes related to dogs. #5. What do dogs eat for breakfast? Pooched Eggs! Get it pooched...eggs. These jokes get better, or at least I think so. Maybe

From the President's Desk

I'm not the best to comment on their greatness, but you be the judge. #4. What type of dogs keep the best time? Watch Dogs! #3 What do you call a dog that does magic tricks? A Labracadabra-dor! #2 What do you do if your dog chews up your dictionary? Take the words right out of his mouth! And #1: What do you get when you cross a dog with a calculator? A best friend you can count on!

OK, OK, enough dad jokes. I can hear you groaning from my place. To all of the fathers out there, Happy Father's Day!

Now, on to more serious topics like the US Army's 250th birthday! Happy birthday to all of you Soldiers who carried the torch of America's freedom. You wrote a blank check payable for your years of service, up to and including your life on the line.

Founded on June 14th, 1775, as the Continental Army to fight in the Revolutionary War. The theme for this year's significant occasion is the Army's motto, "This We'll Defend." The Army honors its rich history and

legacy and looks ahead to shape a future full of battlefield innovation and security and its continued excellence.

Keep an eye on our upcoming events calendar as we fill the remaining months with exciting events dedicated to all things Dawg!



This edition of the Paw Print gives us a glimpse at a treasure of a man whose reputation is second to none. In the early 1940s, very few understood dogs like this man. I won't give too much away, as his story is well worth the read.

This edition also includes an advertisement for our new army-themed swag, available on our website at mwdheritagemuseum.org/store. Get it while it's hot because every purchase moves us closer to funding our physical location.

Greg Dunlap does it again in his article Blackie Gets the Brass. You will have

to tune in next month to get part two, but he leaves you sitting on the edge of your seat, wondering if the inevitable comes to fruition. Much like Curtis Hendel, one of our other Air Force writers, Greg's storytelling abilities never cease to amaze me.

In "A Letter to a Colonel," Lt. Head offers a unique glimpse into his daily life in 1944 as the leader of a dog unit in New Guinea. It's interesting to see something written so long ago that it continues to address everyday issues.

Well, that's all from my desk for this month. Have a wonderful summer.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter and as always,



K9 Leads the Way!

Albert Johnson

If you know a Veteran in Crisis, the VA Veteran's Crisis Line is: Dial 988, Then Press 1.

Bill Wunderlich: An Exceptionally Talented DogMan

by Dixie Gilmore Whitman

Walking through the barks, whines, yips, and growls echoing from the thick walls of the Milwaukee Dog Pound in the late summer of 1942, William “Bill” Wunderlich studied the dogs with an educated eye, spotting details and subtleties that others might overlook. Some dogs eagerly approached the kennel door, anticipating food or attention. Others quivered in the back of their runs.

The soundscape of a municipal “pound” kennel in the 1940s would have been jarring for most dogs and people. However, Bill Wunderlich, a seasoned dogman, was well accustomed to the raucous noises typically found in kennels. Bill’s background helped him cut through the noise and focus on the tractability, intelligence, and soundness of mind and body in this mob of dogs.

As a point man for the new Army K9 Corps, he didn’t go to the Milwaukee shelter to find a pet; instead, he aimed to handpick the first 75 K9 prospects for shipment to Fort Robinson, Nebraska.¹

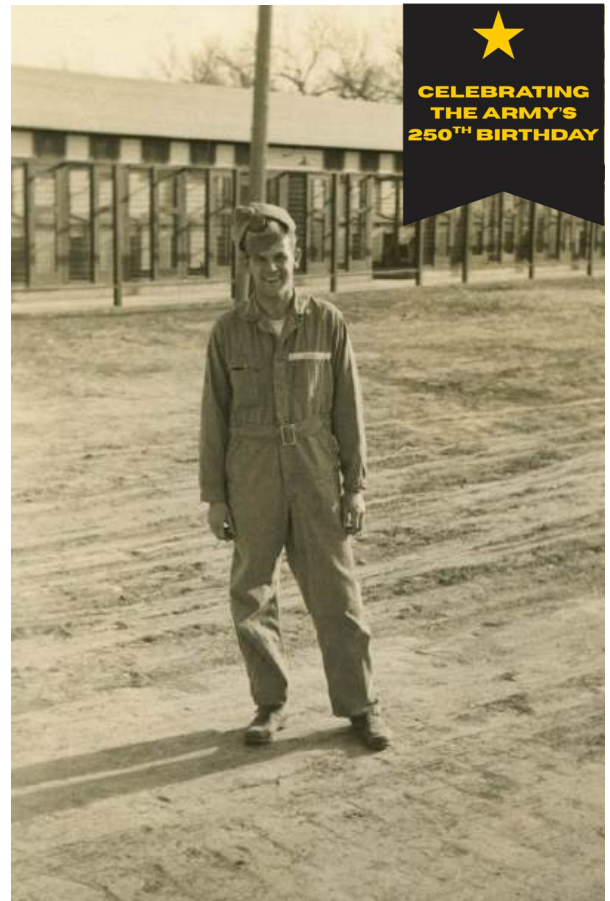
Also at the Milwaukee pound that day stood Alene Erlanger, doyenne of the Dogs for Defense. She coordinated the arrival of several donated dogs to augment Bill’s talent pool of K9s. After carefully making his 75 selections, those dogs were loaded into wooden crates and placed in the luggage

cars of the Chicago and North Western Railroad. The crates were bound for Crawford, Nebraska, and the newly established War Dog Training Center at Fort Robinson.

Winona, Minnesota

Bill Wunderlich grew up in Winona, Minnesota, surrounded by the wetlands, forests, and the bluffs along the upper Mississippi River. Many German immigrants, drawn by the fertile lands and abundant wildlife along the Mississippi Flyway, funneled into the heartland of America, and Bill’s family followed that same path. Over nearby waters, young Bill Wunderlich would have heard the raspy decrescendo hail calls of the female mallards, which made this tiny corner of America a duck-hunting paradise.

Also born in Winona, Minnesota, Ralph G. Boalt, Sr., an authority on duck hunting and a specialist of the golden retriever breed, made a significant gesture of generosity. Considered an expert in the world of goldens, he shared his knowledge and training expertise, but more importantly, he gifted a dog from his kennels to young Wunderlich. Two years after high school graduation, Bill proudly advertised his Flat-Broke Kennels as the “Home of Future Champions” and accepted the moniker of a “golden specialist.”²



Above: Bill Wunderlich, with his trademark wide grin, stands in front of the first kennels built at Fort Robinson. This design of one long kennel building later transitioned into individual dog houses anchored across acres of open Nebraska sandhill prairie.

Published Courtesy History Nebraska Photography Collection, Earl Nills Collection Collection Code: RG2310.PH 1942. Lightly cropped and scratches edited out.

Answering Uncle Sam

As with many young able-bodied men following the tragic events at Pearl Harbor, which pulled America into WWII, young Bill Wunderlich swapped his duck-hunting waders for US-issued Army boots and enlisted in the military.

When the Army brass developed the K9 program, they had few experts in place, so they searched for recruits

with specialized skills, such as the dog training talents possessed by Wunderlich. The Army often filled its early K9 Corps with men who had previously showcased their skills in the most prestigious of settings—the AKC show rings. Some of these men had handled breed champions at events like the Westminster Show just months before enlisting.

Fort Robinson

"I was the first soldier here for dogs," said Wunderlich in a 1977 interview.³

When he arrived in June 1942, only a long, empty, and echoing kennel building stood ready to accept the onslaught of dogs the next few hectic war years would bring.

Fort Robinson, fondly referred to as "Fort Bob" by some, served as a Calvary Remount Station. Thousands of horses and mules grazed there across the sand hills of northwestern Nebraska. In 1942, this old Wild West fort, a remnant from the Indian Wars, would undergo a rapid and remarkable transformation. It would eventually become a training ground for thousands of dogs and their handlers, a far cry from its origins. Bill Wunderlich stood boldly front and center of that change.

With his trademark wide, cheeky grin, Wunderlich easily made friends and influenced people. Playing jokes

on others only broadened his smile, such as when he went on a "dog buying" trip and shipped a bloodhound back to Fort Robinson's Col. McDaniels. While bloodhounds expertly track and trail, they are not known for their stealth mode.

San Carlos

Bill Wunderlich's skill and reputation brought him new challenges. After helping organize and run the K9 program in Nebraska, the Army shipped him to its newest dog center in San Carlos, California, where he replicated his success.

Opening in October 1942, Bill arrived in California just a couple of months later to coordinate and train hundreds of new dogs and handlers from across the military spectrum: Coast Guard, Army, and Marines were all trained under Wunderlich's tutelage.

As with talented men and wartime needs, Bill Wunderlich's rank rose quickly. He

arrived at Fort Robinson as a Buck Sergeant, soon made Tech Sergeant, and quickly became First Sergeant at San Carlos before returning to Fort Robinson in 1944.

After WWII

Joining shortly after WWII broke out meant that Bill Wunderlich's time in the Army came to an end in 1945.

Returning to his roots, Bill once again took up dog-training, working with extraordinary retrievers, generally Labradors and Golden Retrievers.

His expert eye pulled him in the direction of dogs with stardom in their future and he handled two different males to the National Retriever Club Championships in 1951 and 1958.

His 1951 entry, Ready Always of Marionhill "Lucky", would be the last Golden retriever to bring home the trophy. All winners since have been Labradors.

Bill pushed for the building of the National Retriever Museum/Retriever Field Trial Hall of Fame at the National Sporting Dog Center in Grand Junction, Tennessee.

In 1994, Bill Wunderlich was elected to the Retriever Field Trial Hall of Fame. And in 2008, at the age of 88, Bill died on his Angus cattle ranch in Montana.

His love of dogs, training, and the Golden retriever remained with him for his entire lifetime and influenced generations since.



¹ Wanderlick, Bill (Bill Wunderlick Fort Robinson Transcript) Interview by Vance Nelson. (Note: The transcript is documented as Wanderlick instead of Wunderlich.)

https://nebraska.access.preservica.com/uncategorized/10_4c5c7f1d-4d9b-41d5-8943-03de8a625c24/

² Davis, Tom. June 14, 2024. Sporting Classics Daily. Accessed Feb. 4, 2025. (<https://sportingclassicsdaily.com/hall-of-fame-trainer-billy-wunderlich/>)

³ Ibid. Wanderlick, Bill.



Blackie Got the Brass - Part I

This article is another gem from a suite of articles by Greg Dunlap about his time serving as a USAF Sentry Dog handler with the 366th SPS during the Vietnam War.

This month and next we take a look at an eventful inspection by a newly-minted lieutenant.

DaNang steamed with dismal days, always hot and sweaty. The nights we spent on post could have been better used for sleeping: 'After all, it got down to 85 tonight!' One day followed the next. Routine set in. We sought something, anything, to break the boredom.

And it arrived in the form of a banty rooster - or the Air Force equivalent, a 5 foot - 5 1/4-inch Second Lieutenant, a Pain-in-the-Butt. He'd been through Officer Candidate School (OCS) and probably even took ROTC twice. He majored in proctology and minored in smelling salts (in other words, he resembled a body opening).

Most likely, right after getting his bar (singular, brass, and unscratched) pinned on, he begged, demanded, and threw a fit until he got a Combat Posting.

We could almost hear the band in the background. Newly minted officers loved their Combat Postings. Flags waved, and hearts swelled with pride. *Isn't life wonderful? Can you say Combat Posting?*

He probably got sent out because he threw such a fit that they got rid of him, hoping he'd qualify for a frag-

ging. The banty rooster had been here two whole days, and the rumor mill churned full blast. He planned to check all the posts!! Asking for security questions and instructions. Remember those from basic training? What's your fourth security instruction, Airman? You'd better know your password of the day. Cobra and Tiger (the security police flights with flightline security during the day and night) were going nuts about what he had done the day before. He had chewed out so and so, done this, done that. You'd have thought he was Uncle Ho and the devil rolled into one entity. And all things considered, he was. The announcement arrived that he would check the K9 posts. *'Tonight!'*

Spit and Polish

Now, the reader has to understand the differences this poses. Second Lieutenant pain-in-the-butt is all spit and polish, pressed and double-starched. He's just out of the tailors, the bath, and basic training, with a class 1-A me-officer, you-enlisted-man attitude. He's come here to single-handedly straighten us out and win the war for us. And we're supposed to be happy to see him.

Sentry dog handlers were somewhat the opposite. Our uniforms were clean, or at least they once were. I doubt they had ever seen an iron or been anywhere near starch (unless potato spills

at the chow hall count). Boots, without exception, had never been polished; however, we hosed the mud off of them and managed to wash our socks simultaneously. Generally, we kept our hair cut and didn't smell too badly unless in a group, but individually, we were tolerable. We were taught to march in basic training and probably had done it at least once since then.

On the plus side, most of us walked upright, controlled our drooling, and spoke in intelligent sentences. Those who couldn't, had their dogs do the talking for them. There were a few recorded cases where you did get a better-qualified answer by asking the dog and not the handler, but let's not go into that. We generally tended to keep amongst ourselves.

At guard mount, the Flight Sergeant informed us that he would accompany Lieutenant Pain-in-the-Butt as he made the rounds that night, "So be sharp, and let's get this over with."

by Greg Dunlap



Greg Dunlap and Blackie X129, part of the 366th Da Nang Air Force Security Police Squadron. Photo: Courtesy Greg Dunlap

"Yeah, sure thing, Sarge. Haven't these jerks got better things to do than bother us?"

"Maybe he'll not stop when challenged, and we can feed him to the dog."

"Which post does Lance or Blackie have?"

Start with Blackie

The handlers muttered these endearments as we filed away to grab our partners and start our evening. The sergeant called me aside, however.

"Dunlap, I put you on kilo 17 because I will start the inspection tonight with you."

"Ok, Sarge, why are you telling me this?"

"Just thought if the Lieutenant met you and Blackie, it may cause him to stand off the rest of the guys, and we never had this conversation, and don't mention this to anyone either. Got it?"

"What conversation?" I ask, leaving to get Blackie out of his kennel.

I was relieved to find Blackie happy to see me and raring to go. *'We get to go play, I get to go play, let's go play, play, play!!! Put on the chain, put on the leash, put on the muzzle, now let's go, go, go!!! Watch out, here I come, I get to go out.'*

Sometimes, you have to wonder if we really deserve such attention and affection.

Walkout Posting

The walkout posts generally grouped up and took off together as a unit. Each of us would drop off in our area, giving us an opportunity to BS on the way out. We were all reviewing our signals on how to alert everyone else if we got inspected first. We carried Motorola radios that were half the size of a cereal box to communicate with. If one of us got hit by a post-inspection, we would key the mike in a pattern of bursts, 3, 2, 1. Everyone's radio would go *Psst-Psst-Psst, Psst-Psst, Psst*.

Also, the driver back at the kennels would do this when the sergeant walked out to check on us or if he had to drive him out to do it. Sort of an advanced warning system. We'd get the first warning that they were leaving, then the second when they arrived. Not very original, but it worked. Also, this way, the 2nd post anywhere on the line could check out the one beside them and pass the word down if it was in their area or not that the inspection was happening. Everyone was wondering where the banty rooster was

going to strike first. I wondered what Blackie and I were going to do when he landed on us to crow.

Peeling off first on the way out, I wished everyone else good luck and prepared for my chore that evening. One of the problems with our warning system was that the radios always made noise anyway, and sometimes you needed to check if it was the signal. Other times the squelch knob would rotate out so it wouldn't go *'Psst'* no matter what. All this was going through my head as I awaited my fate. Added to this was the fact that I had to wear the helmet, wear the gear, couldn't let Blackie off leash, etc. What a pain in the backside!! *'Maybe we'll get lucky and have a genuine attack, and the enemy will get this inspection postponed. Well, let's get Blackie in a good mood for this anyway.'*

We swept our area, and then I kept Blackie alerted on the Marines walking the back road and in their bunkers. Of course, he thought it was all fun and games. Usually, I tried to keep him from terrorizing the Marines too much. After all, he had quite a reputation with them, and it was unnecessary to keep adding to it. I was startled when I heard the radio squawk, *Psst-Psst-Psst, Psst-Psst, Psst*. We were on notice!

"Let's do this Blackie, watch him!" I put him on alert, and we started to sweep our area. The time had come, and I still didn't know what I was going to do. Short of

letting Blackie eat him, I had to encourage Lieutenant Pain-in-the-Butt that this was not all fun and games and to encourage him to go play somewhere else. The evening was dark, and what little moon shone was blotted out by cloud cover. You had to have good night vision to see anything, and I was counting on theirs still needing adjustment. I saw Blackie make them out, abreast of each other, walking along the perimeter. I knew they hadn't spotted me yet, so I squatted down and let them come to me. When they were about 20 feet away, I stood and challenged them.

The Challenge

"Halt, who goes there?"

At the same time, I allowed Blackie to go to the end of his leash. He knew something was up, and he was playing his part perfectly—watching and growling. There was no doubt that he wanted some action.

"Sergeant So-and-So and Lieutenant Pain-in-the-Butt!" came the reply. The sergeant was around 6 foot 2, and with the 5 foot 5-1/4 inch Lieutenant, they made a Mutt and Jeff-looking pair.

"Advance and be recognized!" I stated, still unsure of what I was going to do next. They moved within 7 or 8 feet, and I told them to stop. Putting My flashlight beam on them, I acknowledged them while reeling Blackie in close to me. I reported my post as secure and waited for what I thought was the inevitable.

Lieutenant Pain-in-the-Butt was beside himself. He sputtered in his excitement!

"A-A-A-Airman, aren't you supposed to salute when you report your post as being secure?" He finally forced out the words.

A light began to shine in the back of my mind; an idea was forming.

He moved closer, within 5 feet now. A moth circling a candle.

"Well, aren't you???"

"No sir", I stated. "Regulations say that I am not supposed to salute you when reporting my post because my dog may interpret that as a signal to attack, sir!"

"Regulations? What regulations?"

"I have never heard of any regulation stating that, Airman!"

Lieutenant Pain-in-the-Butt was in full swing. He fancied that he had caught himself one and would do the officer squeeze play.

"Air Force regulations regarding Sentry Dogs, Sir!" I replied. The Flight Sergeant tried to back me up, but Lieutenant Pain-in-the-Butt would have none of it.

"Airman, I have never heard of any such regulation. I'm an officer, and you will salute me when you report your post to me, got it?"

The Lieutenant had sealed his fate.



Continued next month

Not All Soldiers Wear Green—Some Have Four Legs

by Sgt. Andrew Torrance

Since the founding of the United States Army, Soldiers have relied on military working dogs for support in a variety of roles. Today, these highly trained canines are utilized across all military branches at a significant rate.

Handlers undergo 21 weeks of advanced individual training to earn the military occupational specialty of 31K. At the 525th Military Working Dog Detachment in Vicenza, Italy, five handlers work alongside five dogs – three Belgian Malinois, one German Shepherd, and one German Shepherd/Belgian Malinois mix.

The detachment faces a consistently high operational tempo. “The day is never the same, the schedule is never rigid and is always changing,” said Cpl. Cody L. Knecht of the 525th.

The U.S. Army fields approximately 500 military working dogs. These teams routinely deploy to support combat arms units and, when not deployed, augment base Military Police, conducting searches at entry control points and participating in anti-terrorism measures. They also secure locations ahead of diplomatic visits, often working directly with the Secret Service.

The high demand and limited personnel – with only five handlers assigned to the Vicenza detachment – can strain mission capabilities. At least two handlers

must be on standby at all times, ready to respond to urgent requests.

Military working dogs are granted a rank and grade one position higher than their handlers, recognizing them as servicemembers. Abuse of a military working dog is a crime punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, equivalent to assaulting a non-commissioned officer.

Dogs reside in a kennel managed by a “kennel master” and are fed twice daily, at 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., by their handlers. An Army animal care specialist (MOS 68T) weighs and inspects each dog weekly, adjusting their food rations based on weight and activity level. While dogs are allowed supervised playtime, they are not permitted to interact freely to prevent aggression.

The Department of Defense acquires dogs through contracted breeders in Europe and the United States, as well as the “Puppy Program” at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. This program breeds accomplished military working dogs, with pups beginning their training pipeline at age one.

Training at Lackland, lasting three to six months, focuses on three phases: obedience, aggression, and detection. Obedience training emphasizes responding to commands and body language, with a key test involving releasing a toy on



Military working dog Staff Sgt. Vegas sits patiently during his interview at Caserma Miotto on March 27, 2025. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Andrew Torrance)

command after a stressful situation. Dogs are rewarded with toys for successful obedience, maintaining strict dietary standards.

Aggression training evaluates bite work, requiring dogs to attack and release on command while a trainer wears a bite suit. Detection training assesses the ability to identify explosives or drugs in various environments, including vehicles and buildings.

Graduates are assigned to units across the military. Dogs that fail to complete

training are often placed in adoption programs. Upon retirement, typically around age ten, dogs often live with their last handler.

Military working dog teams play a critical, in-demand role in safeguarding personnel. The 525th Military Working Dog Detachment consistently delivers effective and proficient support. Soldiers and civilians in Europe can be assured that these highly trained teams are actively working to protect them.



A Letter to the Colonel

Letter from Lt. Head to Col. Koester

New Guinea

5 July 1944

Dear Colonel –

We arrived in New Guinea 16 June after an exceptionally fine trip. We had a few hot humid nights but, in general, the temperature was very comfortable. No difficulties were encountered during the occasional rough seas.

One of our dogs embarked with a severely injured leg and later developed eczema over his back. He has now recovered completely. I believe the skin condition was caused by the soaking in hot water (2 hrs. daily) which was done in treatment of the leg. All the other dogs disembarked in fine condition and were looking better than any group I have ever seen.

We were very fortunate in having a deck load of vehicles and I strongly recommend that future shipments be made, whenever at all possible, on ships that carry a similar deck load. The deck load with vehicles enables us to take all of the dogs out on deck early in the morning to be staked out in the shade of the vehicles throughout the day. The men are permitted to leave their dogs staked out all night provided that the dog's master stays out with him. About 5 to 12 men remained out with their dogs regularly.

Here's the schedule we followed enroute:

7:00 -	First call.
7:00 - 7:15	Get dogs staked out.
7:15 - 7:30	Calisthenics (2 groups, 15 min. each)
7:30 - 8:30	Policing up, watering dogs, etc., getting ready for the day.
8:30 - 9:30	Breakfast
9:30 - 10:30	Massaging & grooming dogs.
10:30 - 11:00	Military instruction.
11:00 - 12:00	Bayonet drill & unarmed defense (1/2 hr. ea.)
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch
13:30 - 16:00 &	
16:15 - 17:30	Leisure time spent in the immediate vicinity of the dog (Plenty of reading material is available.)
16:00 - 16:15	Feed dogs.
17:30 - 18:30	Dinner
18:30	Return dogs to "igloo."

We watered the dogs very sparingly the first few days to prevent intestinal disturbance but, thereafter, they had drinking water available at all times during the day (none at nite in the crate.) This system helps very much toward keeping the crates clean. Because the crates were seldom messed up at night, it was never necessary to remove any for the purpose of cleaning.

We attributed the total absence of sore feet and skin



This letter from Lt. Head to Col. Koester at Fort Robinson discusses the 26th War Dog Platoon ocean crossing to New Guinea. As the second Army K9 platoon to arrive in the Pacific, the 26th handlers were later assigned to the 31st and 32d Infantry Divisions. On the island of Morotai, the 26th QM War Dog Platoon participated in 250 patrols over two-and-a-half months. Over the course of these patrols, not a single one was ambushed, proving the invaluable nature of the scout dogs. ¹

trouble to the extreme care taken in keeping the shipping crates dry and in choosing a place to stake the dog out that would drain immediately. No attempt was made to protect the dogs from rain or from the spray of rough seas except what was offered under the vehicles.

Vigorous massage proved a very satisfactory substitute for physical exercise. After 30 minutes of massage the dog is content to relax & sleep for several hours. One dog became constipated but was relieved without medication by walking and massaging his abdomen.

Our dogs were grouped on deck by squads and squad leaders supervised the details of grooming, massage, watering, feeding, and policing. Each squad had its own shovel, feed & water pans, and 5 gal. water can. It would be more convenient if 2 feed & water pans were provided per dog.

The shed on the "igloo" was indispensable. I suggest it be made larger (12 ft. long would not be too big.) One man was assigned permanent quarters in the shed. He was put in charge of the care and preservation of all our equipment & the police

of the "igloo." Each day 1 man was assigned to help him.

The facilities and comforts aboard ship were excellent. The food was very good and the Captain and crew were very cooperative. Captain Conrad took a keen interest in the welfare of the dogs and he told me that he would stop to see you on his return to the States.

We had no trouble in disembarking. It took considerable arranging to prevent eager troop movement and cargo control officials from moving men, dogs, and equipment in three or more directions, but I managed to keep everything in one place under armed guard while I personally arranged for transportation. In the interim, T/Sgt. Robertson went ahead and scouted out a very suitable camp site. He took a squad & had it all ready to move into by the time I had transportation.

We received a request from the combat front for 3 war dogs & necessary handlers a few days after arrival. There was nothing in the message to indicate for what purpose they were desired. I radioed a request for clarity & permission to accompany the dogs (suggesting to bring 3 scout dogs & 1 Messenger team.) After 2 days I sent the 3 dogs as requested because I had no answer to my radio.

I assumed they wanted to see what we had so I sent 1 scout dog, 1 messenger

dog, & 1 combination scout & messenger (the best we had) handled by T/Sgt Robertson, Sgt. Schut, & T/S Thompson (also the best we had.) They left 21 June & I haven't heard anything from them since.

At this moment, I am awaiting air transportation to CHQ – for what purpose, I can only guess.

We have completed our staging – have all of our T/BA & T/E equip. The men are ready and anxious to get to work. The jeeps & trailers have enabled us to get the dogs away from camp to work in the jungle – they've been getting out at least 5 days per week. The messenger dogs are working better than ever before. The scout dogs are working very well but the work conditions are very poor in the jungle. They seem to be improving, however, with practice.

We have received fullest cooperation here at the Port. The fact that we're tactical gives us many advantages.

We arrived here with 1000 lbs. of fresh horse meat & some meal. I thought it advisable to avoid changing diet until after the dogs had become acclimated but within 2 weeks we had 7 cases of moist eczema. I think it must have been caused by the damp heat in combination with the rich protein diet. I'm not sure because there seems to be many strange skin troubles here. We stopped feeding

the horse meat, however, & are now feeding canned food – 24 oz. daily – corned beef 3 days, corned beef hash 2 days, and salmon 1 day – alternated each day. We've been feeding the above for 1 week and haven't had any more eczema since the change.

Gentian violet jelly has been effective in treatment. Since we will probably need it in considerable quantity & there is none available here, I would like for you to arrange the shipment of a supply to us.

Pvt. Sullivan, our vet tech, continues to be a problem. I think his trouble is a driving desire to display his veterinary talents together with a resentment toward being directed by the ordinary layman. I haven't been able to decide whether he determined to operate the way he wants to, or if he's too stupid to understand what I want.

About a week ago, I criticized the way he trimmed away too much of the coat in treating eczema cases & carefully explained that, although it is necessary to trim the immediate area of a skin sore for treatment, the dog needs his coat for protection here against the heat and, particularly, the insects. During my absence yesterday he clipped off one dog's coat entirely. The dog looked like his entire body had been shaved. This is just an example of several similar occasions.

I'd hate to be without someone, who had some experience in treating dog ailments but I can't take very much more. At the first opportunity, I will investigate the possibility of replacing him.

Everything else is set and ready and every man is anxious to get started. I hope our opportunity will come soon.

What we've seen of New Guinea has not been nearly as bad as was expected. The mosquito has been practically exterminated in this area and, at present, it is not extremely hot. There is very much rain (36" in 30 hrs. is a recent record) but it's not so bad after you get used to being wet all the time. It's very beautiful, too. I guess it's a bit silly describing these islands to you.

The unit as a whole feels privileged to be the one operating in this particular theatre because of where we think our operations may be in the future.

Give my regards to Mrs. Koester and to my many friends at the Dog Center.

Lt. Head ²

¹ Paltzer, Seth. "The Dogs of War: The U.S. Army's Use of Canines in WWII." The Army Historical Foundation. <https://armyhistory.org/the-dogs-of-war-the-u-s-armys-use-of-canines-in-wwii/>

² July 5, 1944. Letter written to Col. Koester, Fort Robinson, Nebraska from Lt. Head of the 26th QM K9 Platoon. HistoryNebraska Archives.





CELEBRATING
THE ARMY'S
250TH BIRTHDAY

US Army Dogs

SERVING AROUND THE WORLD

BELOW: U.S. ARMY SPC. ETHAN WINANS, GETS READY TO LEAD HIS DOG, TOKYO, AS THEY SEARCH A SPORTS FIELD, DURING THEIR YEARLY CERTIFICATION ON CHIÈVRES AIR BASE, BELGIUM, JUNE 5, 2024. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY PIERRE-ETIENNE COURTEJOIE)

U.S. ARMY SPC. SAMIYA SOUTIEN, A DOG HANDLER ASSIGNED TO THE 901ST MILITARY POLICE DETACHMENT, AND HER MILITARY WORKING DOG, MALNA, POSE FOR A PHOTO AT SAGAMI GENERAL DEPOT, JAPAN, DEC. 9, 2024. (PHOTO BY U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD SPC. BETHANY CRAVALHO)



BELOW: MIMA, A U.S. ARMY MILITARY WORKING DOG ASSIGNED TO THE 520TH MILITARY POLICE DETACHMENT SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, HAWAII, JANUARY 15, 2025 (PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. TRISTAN MOORE)



SGT. ERIC RAMOS, A HANDLER ASSIGNED TO THE 525TH K9 DETACHMENT, POSES WITH HIS DOG, VEGAS ON CASERMA DEL DIN, AUGUST 16, 2024 (U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY 1ST LT. KATHERINE SIBILLA)



ABOVE: U.S. ARMY STAFF SGT. WILLIAM ADAMS, A HANDLER ASSIGNED TO 520TH MILITARY WORKING DOG DETACHMENT, AND HIS DOG, MWD GIDEON, PREPARE TO CONDUCT BITE TRAINING DURING EXERCISE BALIKATAN 24, AT FORT MAGSAYSAY, PHILIPPINES, APRIL 24, 2024.



ABOVE: AN UNIDENTIFIED MILITARY WORKING DOG HANDLER ASSIGNED TO U.S. ARMY CENTRAL, INSPECTS A CARGO TRUCK RETURNING AFTER TRANSPORTING HUMANITARIAN AID FROM THE U.S. ARMY VESSEL LSV-1. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. MALCOLM COHENS-ASHLEY)



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

From the Team at MWDHM...

We invite you to join the museum's journey
by signing up for a free *Paw Print* subscription.
Email: info@mwdhm.org

**Military Working Dog Heritage:
Always on Point**

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Military Working Dog Heritage Museum

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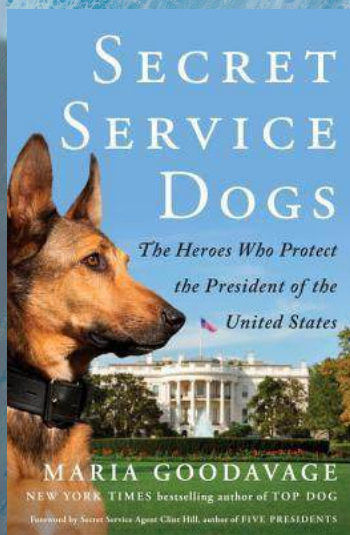
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Book of the Month



Secret Service Dogs: The Heroes Who Protect the President of the United States by Maria Goodavage dives deep into the world of highly trained canines that guard the President, Vice President, and their families. Goodavage's storytelling illuminates the often overlooked but vital role of these K9 units.

The detailed accounts of the dogs' training and real-life missions are fascinating and humbling. They are a testament to the incredible capabilities and dedication of these dogs and their handlers.

By Greg Dunlap.

Submitted Photo of the Month



**CELEBRATING
THE ARMY'S
250TH BIRTHDAY**

From Ken Claflin:

Two of Prinz's canine teeth were broken off and jagged when I was assigned to him in January 1970. On this training session at Team F, Camp Coryell he ripped our team's only sleeve to shreds. Sgt. Griffis was not happy! Sgt. Boughton (left) trying to keep his distance.