



Markey leaps over an obstacle, as SSgt. Jason Albrecht runs the military working dog through an obedience training session at Shaw AFB, S.C., in July 2011.

USAF photo by SrA. Kenny Holston



From foreign battlefields to the homeland, dogs serve airmen in countless ways.

AIRMAN'S BEST FRIEND

Photos by DOD photographers

JBSA-Lackland, Texas, home of the Defense Department's military working dog program since 1958, has the world's largest training center for military dogs and their handlers.

With a heightened sense of smell that is stronger than what any human

possesses, the dogs are trained to detect explosives and drugs and to accompany their handlers on patrols.

The US military has predominantly used four working dog breeds since World War II: Doberman Pinscher, German Shepherd, Labrador Retriever, and Belgian Malinois.



[1] Military working dogs fill a variety of roles. Here, Breston, from the 375th Security Forces Squadron, subdues an airman acting as an uncooperative suspect during a K-9 competition at Scott AFB, Ill., on May 17, 2014. **[2]** Then-SSgt. Leonard Anderson takes a break from training with his military working dog, Azza. **[3]** Maj. Regina Owens, a psychiatric nurse, pins an oak leaf on the newly promoted "Major" Goldie, a therapy dog from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Md., during a Nov. 12, 2014, ceremony at the Pentagon. Several nonprofit organizations provide service dogs for veterans. **[4]** SSgt. Christopher Ebeling, a military working dog handler assigned to the provost marshal's office at Camp Victor in Baghdad, Iraq, and his German Shepherd, Nero, search through a palm grove for weapons or explosives.

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USAF photo by SrA. Sarah Hall-Kirchner



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USAF photo by SSgt. Mark Burrell



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USAF photo by A1C Zachary Perras



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USAF photo by Scott M. Ash



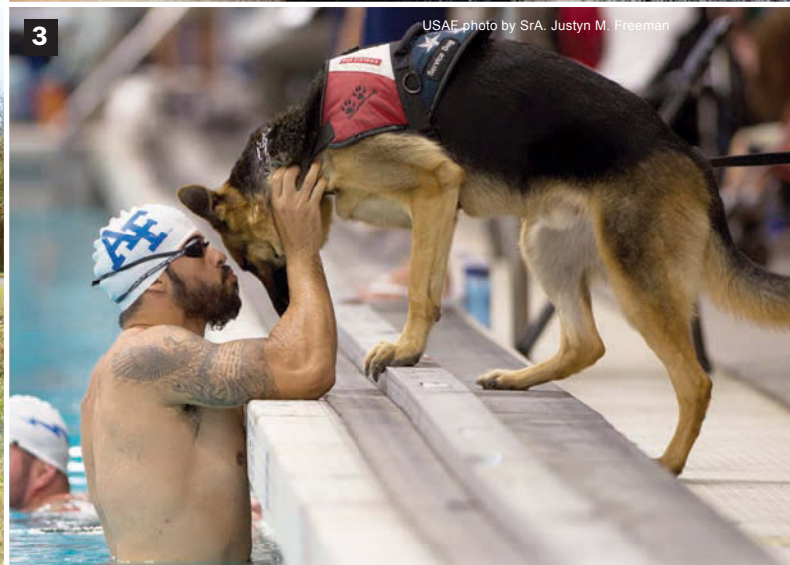
USAF photo by A1C Jack Sanders



USAF photo by SrA. Melanie Bulow-Goterman



USAF photo by SrA. Stephen J. Otero



USAF photo by SrA. Justyn M. Freeman

[1] SSgt. Greg Maatta yells at a “suspect,” played by TSgt. Robert Black, to stop before releasing Dusty during an exercise at JB Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. Both airmen were assigned to the 3rd Security Forces Squadron. [2] Alex, from the 6th Security Forces Squadron at MacDill AFB, Fla., lays next to his handler before a Coast Guard helicopter training flight. The experience conditions the dog to the loud noise and high altitude, assuring the handler that the canine partner can perform on deployment under hectic circumstances. [3] Retired SSgt. August O’Niell kisses his service dog, Kai, before swimming in the 2014 Warrior Games last Sept. 30 at the US Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo. [4] SSgt. Kristopher Russ and Rouge, both with the 2nd Security Forces Squadron at Barksdale AFB, La., participate in an expeditionary combat skills training course. The dogs are integrated into it to provide a realistic patrolling experience.

[1] Iggy lunges toward SrA. Alexander Nutting, a 379th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron MWD handler, during a working dog demonstration at Al Udeid AB, Qatar, on April 5, 2014. Nutting was deployed from Moody AFB, Ga. **[2]** Pintler waits patiently for his owner, retired

TSgt. Keith Sekora, to finish the track and field portion of the Warrior Games. The dogs are allowed all-access to every event and area, to maintain constant contact with the athletes. **[3]** SSgt. Dennis Browning, a MWD handler deployed from the 21st Security Forces Squadron at Peterson AFB, Colo., and King,

an explosives and patrol attack dog, search an area during a clearing operation south of Baqouba, Iraq, in 2007. **[4]** SSgt. Laura Felts, with the 386th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, releases her partner, Bert, to attack a decoy during aggression training in 2007 at a deployed location in Southwest Asia.



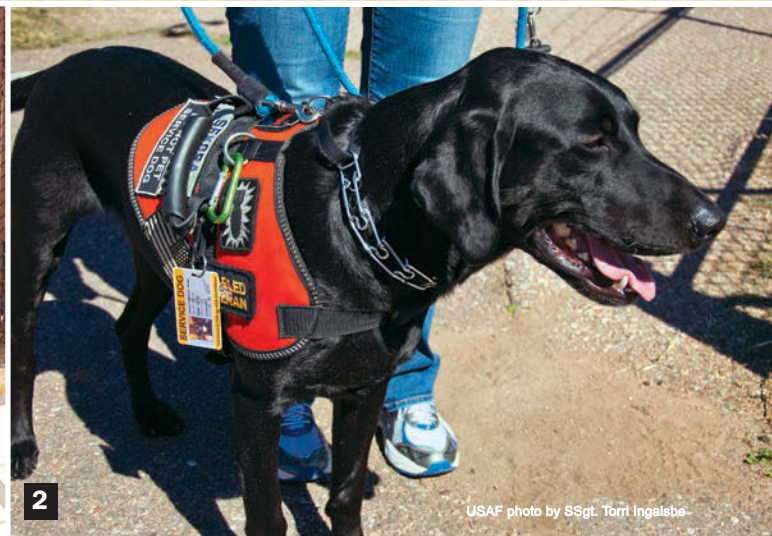
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USAF photo by SrA. Hannah Landeros



USAF photo by SSgt. Tria Schroeder

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USAF photo by SSgt. Torri Ingalsbe



USA photo by Sgt. Armando Monroig

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[1] SrA. Brian Claypool, with the 22nd Security Forces Squadron, encourages Rakker with a toy in September 2013, at McConnell AFB, Kan. Dogs at the squadron's kennel section receive training once a year at the base pool to familiarize them with bodies of water and encourage them to perform in different environments. **[2]** Security forces airmen and a MWD secure the area after getting out of a mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicle during a training exercise at the Nevada Test

and Training Range. **[3]** Two military working dogs sit in front of their newly remodeled kennels in November 2010, at Offutt AFB, Neb. MWDs patrolled the base nearly 24 hours a day. **[4]** Petty Officer 3rd Class Andrew Barnhart restrains his dog during a session of working dog training at JBSA-Lackland. Military working dogs go through a 60- or 90-day training program where they learn to detect explosives and drugs. They also learn deterrence training and how to protect their handler.

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USAF photo by SrA. Laura L. Valentine



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USAF photo by SrA. Christopher Griffin



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USAF photo by A1C Daniel Hughes



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USAF photo by Josh Plueger

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[1] Gabe, a 12-year-old German Malinois, takes a bite out of TSgt. Nathan Nash's padded sleeve during an attack demonstration on July 27, 2010, in Southwest Asia. **[2]** Service dog Kai lays on O'Niell's lap during an Air Force Wounded Warrior sitting volleyball practice at JB Andrews,

Md., last November. O'Niell was a pararescueman who was wounded in July 2011 in Afghanistan. **[3]** TSgt. Randall Blair, 20th Security Forces Squadron military working dog trainer, falls away from Markey during training at Shaw in July 2011. **[4]** Spc. Than Kywe, an Air Force

theater hospital patient at JB Balad, Iraq, in 2009, has a lighthearted moment with Cezar, a 332nd Expeditionary Security Forces Group explosives-detection military working dog, during a K-9 visitation program. The program furthers patient recovery through animal-assisted therapy.

USAF photo by SrA. Laura Turner

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USAF photo by SSgt. Dilia Ayala

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USAF photo by TSgt. Brian Ferguson

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USAF photo by SrA. Kenny Holston



USAF photo by Greg L. Davis **1**



2 USAF photo by Perry Aston



USA photo by Pfc. William Servinski III **3**



4 USAF photo by SrA. Jette Carr

[1] Johnny crouches down while running through a pipe at the 436th Security Forces Squadron's obedience course at Dover AFB, Del., last September. **[2]** Military working dog Ali goes after Seaman Andrew English in July 2010 at Al Asad AB, Iraq. **[3]** TSgt. John Mascolo and Ajax, left, await a helicopter pickup with SSgt. Manny Garcia and Jimmy outside FOB Normandy, Iraq,

on Feb. 28, 2006. The dogs wear "doggles" to prevent sand and debris from getting in their eyes. Mascolo and Garcia were assigned to the 35th Security Forces Squadron and had just completed a sweep, looking for weapons and materials used to make improvised explosive devices. **[4]** Moe, an Air Force service dog, watches retired MSgt. Kyle Burnett compete in the 2014 Warrior Games

archery competition on Oct. 1, 2014, at the US Olympic Training Center. "As a nation, we owe our war dogs a tremendous debt of gratitude," said John Burnam, a scout dog handler in the Vietnam War and author of two books on military working dogs. "Their selfless service, loyalty, and sacrifices to our country must never be forgotten." 🐾

Capt. Brian Walker, an Air Force Reserve judge advocate, runs a Commissioned Officer Training class at Maxwell AFB, Ala. In 2013, OTS produced 1,445 line officers, plus 1,582 officers in COT.



THE Air Force has taken a significant step forward in its effort to mold its Active Duty, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve airmen into a Total Force team, merging the previously separate training programs that commission new officers for the three components.

The first class combining officer candidates from all three components formed at the Air Force Officer Training School, Maxwell AFB, Ala., in January and is scheduled to conclude with a commissioning ceremony March 13 after eight weeks of sharing the same demanding regime of mental and physical training and character development.

That class will be the start of a unifying process that Col. Scott M. Lockwood, OTS commandant, calls “one furnace, one metal.”

And it will advance the strong emphasis on building a Total Force spirit that has been promoted by Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James and Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III.

The combined commissioning program is a “natural follow-on” to the last 13 years of “going to war as a Total Force,” Lockwood said. “We train as a Total Force US Air Force for everything, except for the initial [officer] accession.”

Lockwood termed the unified officer development program a capital investment that will pay off years down the road. “We’re going to be a much better force for it. We’re going to have officers at the very senior levels that have grown up in a Total Force construct, and they’re going to better understand the different components, the vitality of each one, and what each one of them

brings to the fight, the capabilities, the limitations, the special nuances of every component,” he said

“It really makes sense to get training at the accession level of our Total Force,” the colonel said. “And what that required was for us to go past some of the inhibitions that were out there.”

SHARED, COMMON EXPERIENCE

The proposal to merge the separate commissioning programs at OTS, which Lockwood said in 2013 produced more than half of all new Air Force officers, originated with the school’s leaders and was approved by Gen. Robin Rand, commander of Air Education and Training Command, and by the Air Staff.

But perhaps the most significant approval came from the National Guard leadership when the adjutants general (TAGs) of the states agreed to give up