

Veteran

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Hours into the detail, Bram showed a heightened level of interest on a delivery truck so Kendall allowed Bram to enter the vehicle off leash. Bram was trained to search on and off leash and if Bram detected an explosive, he would sit and wait for further commands from his handler.

Bram entered the truck and disappeared from Kendall's sight for a brief moment. When Bram reappeared, it was to inform his human partner of an explosive device? No. He had bratwurst links draping from his mouth to several feet on the ground behind him.

Although an excellent trained military working dog, Bram seemed to humiliate himself with "pranks" on his handler on a regular basis.

One day while patrolling the streets of the Air Force base, Kendall wasn't able to sit down for lunch due to a busy schedule, so he grabbed something to eat and hit the road.

Shortly after getting his food, the soldier initiated a traffic stop. While conducting business at the driver's window of the stopped vehicle, he noticed Bram was not peering through the windshield like usual to assist his partner if he encountered trouble.

It didn't take Kendall long to figure out why. When he returned to his patrol vehicle, he observed Bram laying in his kennel licking the remains of Kendall's lunch from his lips.

Kendall and Bram worked well together and strived to improve their tactics. One day Kendall began the training process of having Bram exit the vehicle via a window in the event his partner was outside the car and somebody attacked him.

Kendall and another handler stood in front of his patrol vehicle talking while Bram sat inside the car watching. After a cue, the other handler attacked Kendall in hopes Bram would exit the vehicle. Since this was a first trial, Kendall kept an eye on the dog

during the staged fight and recalls seeing Bram leap from the back seat only to be stopped by the windshield.

About a week after learning the task of exiting the vehicle on his own, Kendall was patrolling the base with a K-9 Supervisor for evaluation purposes. During a car stop, an arrest was made and Kendall had the driver out of the vehicle and handcuffing him. During the search of the man's lower leg, Kendall felt something wet hit his hand. He looked and there was Bram, almost with a proud smile on his face, showing off his new trick of exiting a vehicle.

Kendall and Bram later deployed to various locations such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and Germany. A story that stuck with Kendall from Germany was during a heightened alert level for United States Military bases.

Kendall and Bram were dispatched late at night to inspect a suspicious item. Generally, this was for an Explosive Ordinance Disposal team but since they were deployed to help with the closure of Rhein-Main Air Base in Frankfurt, Germany, the closest team was over an hour away.

Kendall and Bram searched the item, which was near the barracks of numerous military personnel, with no alert from Bram. Kendall informed the base Commander and the Commander asked if he trusted his dog. The soldier replied that he had full trust in his dog and would be willing to do a hands-on inspection of the device so everybody could relax.

The Commander approved the hands-on inspection so Kendall put Bram in his patrol vehicle. As Kendall and another military member approached the device in the darkness of the cold winter night, Bram did what Bram was good at...making a name for himself. As his human partner reached slowly for the device, Bram jumped around in the patrol vehicle, setting off a loud, audible car alarm, resulting in Kendall and the other military official to run screaming from the device.

Kendall and Bram's final deployment together was to Baghdad, Iraq. Here they were assigned to the United States Embassy and provided security for Saddam Hussein's trial with the United States Marshals.

One incident that fellow K-9 handlers assigned to the Embassy reminded Kendall of was how he and Bram were part of the historical event of Saddam Hussein's trial, yet Bram would forever be known as the dog that took a bathroom break in the courtroom. Bram had a way of making a name for himself everywhere he went in the world.

While assigned to the Embassy, Kendall and Bram also assisted various military units on combat patrols.

One mission in Baghdad with an Army unit, dog and handler were sent out in front of the patrol with another soldier as a spotter. As they approached an abandoned vehicle on foot, Bram alerted on the trunk of the car to indicate explosives.

Kendall turned to inform the spotter of the alert, but the spotter was already sprinting in the other direction. Bram was the spearhead of several high stress and potentially fatal scenarios such as this.

Kendall recalls many hot afternoons of convoying through Iraq with Bram sitting on his lap in the backseat of armored vehicles. Sometimes the air conditioner would go out in the vehicles but the windows couldn't be rolled down.

Bram did not ask for this job but never hesitated and never showed fear. It was as if Bram knew his mission was to protect the lives of fellow Americans.

During Bram's prestigious military career, he deployed a total of 10 times to various countries and pre-deployment training to locations all over the United States.

Bram was honorably retired from the Air Force on Aug. 19, 2008. Kendall and his wife, Holly, adopted Bram to live with their family in Blue Springs,

Mo. Weston and Holly were stunned as to how readily Bram accepted their three little children. Holly reflected on how easily the dog adapted to civilian life.

"Bram loved our children," she said. "Whether he was playing ball with Gabriel in the backyard or playing his version of tag with Nevaeh and Brookelinn, Bram was an amazing companion to our kids."

What was Bram's version of tag? It's where Bram would take one of the girl's toys and run as the girls chased him. Kendall accepted a K-9 position with the Blue Springs Police Department, which prohibited other animals in the house, so Bram moved to Phillipsburg to reside with Dustin Kendall and Hollie Rumbaugh.

Bram prospered in his years of work but thoroughly enjoyed the freedom of retirement.

"Bram was a special gift from God that protected me during battle but touched so many people even in retirement," Kendall said.

Veterans found comfort and ease in talking to Bram when he attended military parades and functions. One of Bram's favorite people during his time in Phillipsburg was Vietnam Navy SEAL Veteran Dennis Rumbaugh. Bram and Rumbaugh developed a bond that only combat Veterans could understand. Not to mention, Bram enjoyed being spoiled with his favorite foods each time he visited Dennis by



Weston Kendall, along with his Military Working Dog, Bram, were stationed at various locations around the world with the United States Air Force. Bram passed away at the age of 15 on Oct. 10.

—Photo courtesy of Weston Kendall

Carolyn Rumbaugh.

Military Working Dog Bram passed away at 1:12 a.m. on Monday, Oct. 10 in Phillipsburg at the age of 15. Bram was not a pet. He was a retired military veteran. He was someone whom the parents of Weston, Cliff and Marlene Kendall loved and respected for protecting his handler and many other soldiers throughout his career.

"Weston lost a good friend and partner when (Bram) died," said Marlene Kendall "We remember stories of Weston hanging out with Bram at the kennels during their first deployment to Iraq, and Weston reading letters from home to him. Weston shared his cot with Bram to get him out of the extreme heat at other times. They took care of each other."

Military Working Dog Bram, a four-legged humbled hero, will forever be remembered by those that knew him.

Local manufacturer announces scholarship

Gail Boller, President of Natoma Corporation in Norton, announced this week the first annual Natoma Industrial Technology Scholarship for area students. This scholarship is intended to provide insight for students of the opportunities available right here in Northwest Kansas to train and develop toward long-range career goals.

The scholarship will be awarded to as many as three recipients, each of whom will receive a \$1,000 scholarship per semester for a maximum of four semesters. The scholarship criteria includes working a 100-hour internship at Natoma Corporation, majoring in an Industrial Technology or related field, and attending high school in an area within approximately 60 miles of Norton.

The deadline for applications is Jan. 31. Applications have been mailed to all area schools and are also available online at www.natomacorporation.com.

4-H

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Keith VanSlike, Twin Creeks Extension District Agent, announced the summaries of each club activities involving the Club Promotion Award. Prairie Dog Club summary and Busy Beavers summary were noted as the Blue Award winners by the judging committee and all 4-H Clubs received their Purple Seal of Involvement from the State 4-H Office.

Volunteer leaders and committee members named various award recipients. These volunteers were Carol Griffith, Patsy Maddy, Mindy Harting, Joy Johnson, Lee Ann Shearer, Jeana Cozad, Mary Vanover and Jamie and Galen Wentz. Members of the 4-H Council presented Awards for Record Book Completion to 4-H Members. Those members were Wyatt Wentz, Tyler Montgomery, Kolton Harting,

Carson Montgomery, Marisa Maddy and Austin Hager. A special award by Norton County Farm Bureau recognized 4-H Camp Counselors. Joel Duscher, Norton Area Chamber President, presented the 2011 Friend of 4-H Award to Dave Ward of Clayton. The "I DARE YOU" Award, a mid-career 4-H award for aspiring leaders, was given to Wyatt Wentz. The Key Award was awarded to Megan Wentz.

The Norton County 4-H Council announced a club challenge to all other 4-H Clubs to contribute towards the "God's Pantry" service project along with the local County Clerk's Challenge. 4-H families that wish to give donations, can drop off non-perishable food items to the Twin Creeks Extension office at 107 S. State.

The 4-H Achievement Night Planning Committee consisted of Carol Griffith, Mindy Harting, Nancy Hager and Jeana Cozad.

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Community Calendar



Please submit your events for the Community Calendar which is printed in the Monday EXTRA. Events may be e-mailed to: nortontelegram@nwkansas.com or mailed to 215 South Kansas Avenue

THE NORTON TELEGRAM
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