
American Citizens Organize Donations for Dog Handlers in Iraq

By Sergeant First Class Reginald P. Rogers

The military police motto “Of the Troops and For the Troops” has been taken to heart by some American citizens concerned for the Army’s four-legged troops—the military working dogs (MWDs). The MWD teams, which are an integral part of the US missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, devote many hours to various missions. The dogs work in heat and sandstorms, just like their human team members.

The dogs’ welfare and the soldiers’ efforts prompted one Humane Society volunteer “to do her part.” She said she wanted to let soldiers know that Americans appreciate their efforts and also wanted to help the dogs that are serving their country. She and a group of friends and coworkers talked about aiding the MWDs specifically. Research yielded an idea—Doggles® (goggles)—for the dogs to protect their eyes from the desert sandstorms. The group solicited donations, and the Doggles Company, which is based in North Carolina, agreed to sell their protective eyewear to the group at wholesale prices.

A Doggles Company spokesman said the firm has been contacted several times—mostly by veterinarians in Iraq where protecting the eyes of the MWDs can be a problem. The company has sent the dog handlers nearly 10 dozen Doggles. According to the US Army Training and Doctrine Command’s MWD manager, once the first few packages were shipped to MWD teams, donations started pouring in. The group of volunteers has collected more than \$2,200 from individuals and businesses in their local areas. The group has received so many donations that it is sending out small packages every couple of weeks, exceeding the original plan to send out packages every four to six weeks.

Besides obtaining Doggles, another project for the group is getting boots to protect the dogs’ feet from the hot sand.

The volunteers’ generosity has impressed the deployed MWD teams. One Fort Sill, Oklahoma, soldier said that

when he returns from his deployment to Afghanistan, he plans to meet the volunteers’ leader when he visits his family in Michigan. He wants to thank her personally for her generosity. A military police soldier from Fort Bliss, Texas, said he was grateful for the morale boost the packages gave soldiers during “rough times.” The group has sent other items that come in handy for the dog handlers, including collapsible water bowls, rawhide chews, nail clippers, eyewash, and ear cleaner.



Rocko, an MWD, models the latest in canine safety gear—Doggles and boots.