



THE MINE DOG MESSENGER

*Removing landmines while promoting stability
and saving lives*

The Marshall Legacy Institute Newsletter

June 2013

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SAVE THE DATE!

[OCTOBER 9, 2013 - 16TH ANNUAL "CLEARING THE PATH" GALA](#)

[FOUR SEASONS HOTEL, WASHINGTON, DC](#)

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Saving & Improving Lives in Kurdistan: Mine Detection Dog Partnership Program

In 2008, MLI partnered with the [Mines Advisory Group \(MAG\)](#) in Kurdistan, Iraq, to tackle the region's landmine problem. According to the [Landmine Monitor Report](#), Kurdistan is one of the most heavily mine-contaminated regions of the world. It is estimated that there are more than 2,300 minefields, with the heaviest concentration along the Iran/Iraq border, which affect more than 800 villages.

To help combat the devastating effects of landmines and reduce the region's contamination, and with the generous support of the U.S. Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) and private donors, MLI donated six Mine



MDD Lessle with handler in Kurdistan

Detection Dogs (MDDs) to MAG in 2009, which they incorporated into their mine clearance efforts. Mine Detection Dogs can "sniff out" landmines 30 times faster than human deminers, and so are able to help organizations like MAG search minefields more quickly, especially when doing quality assurance searches to ensure an area is indeed mine-free.

MAG was able to use these MDDs to search 890,903 square meters, or 220 acres, of mine-contaminated land in Kurdistan over the past 4 years, impacting thousands of lives. Last September, MDDs *Dori* and *Eron* demonstrated signs of aging and were retired to live out the rest of their lives in comfort with their handlers. The four remaining MDDs, *Arco*, *Bowie*, *Harry*, and *Lessle* continue in their life-saving work by helping MAG locate hidden explosives. In just the past 6 months, these wonderful dogs and their dedicated handlers cleared 104,215 square meters, or 26 acres, of land in the Kirkuk governorate region, which can now be used for grazing and agriculture.

MAG has done an excellent job in both taking care of the MDDs and in utilizing their amazing noses. This year, MAG's MDD Unit even added some extra special equipment to improve the dogs' physical training, such as the acquisition of a Springer for push bikes and a dog wagon that can be utilized at any time during the year, particularly in the winter. The new equipment compliments the swimming pool they recently installed for the dogs, which is used for physical training during the summer. The physical fitness of the MDDs is important for both their safety and health and MLI is thrilled that MAG is going to so much effort to ensure the dogs are safe, happy, and in prime physical condition.



Off-season MDD training



MDD training with handler

[2013 K9-9K Sponsors a Mine Detection Dog](#)

On Saturday, April 27th, the Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI) held the 3rd annual K9-9K Walkathon & Fun Run at Glenelg Country School (GCS) to celebrate the heroic work of Mine Detection Dogs (MDDs) around the world and to raise money to send one more lifesaving dog into the field. More than 200 people attended the event and MLI is so grateful to Glenelg Country School's staff, students, and parents who came out to support MLI's humanitarian cause, as well as the many other individuals from the DC metro area who joined in on the fun and helped to raise money for a life-saving MDD. [Click here to view pictures of the K9-9K!](#)



We are excited to announce that, with the help of Robbie Goodman, the 2013 K9-9K raised enough money to sponsor a life-saving Mine Detection Dog! Robbie Goodman is a wonderful young man who dedicated his Bar Mitzvah last Fall to supporting MLI and the sponsorship of a MDD. By combining the money he raised with that of the K9-9K, a Belgian Malinois, chosen by Robbie and named by Glenelg Country School, recently deployed to Iraq to be paired with a handler and complete the final stages of her training.

MDD Barrett left for Iraq on May 27th to complete training

The dog (shown left) has been named MDD *Barrett*, in honor of PFC Barrett L. Austin, a U.S. soldier who was traveling in a vehicle that was attacked by an improvised explosive device (IED) in the Wardak Province of Afghanistan last Spring. PFC Barrett Austin passed away four days after the explosion, on April 21, 2013, from the injuries he sustained; he was serving in Afghanistan with Staff Sgt. Brendan Fossum, the brother of a 2nd grader at Glenelg Country School. SSG Fossum was PFC Austin's squad leader and was severely injured in the same IED explosion that killed PFC Austin. He is now recovering at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, MD and it was his request that the dog be named in honor of PFC Austin, a combat engineer whose role was to perform route clearance of mines and IEDs so the military and vehicles of commerce could freely navigate the roadways in Afghanistan.

All of us at MLI were deeply saddened to hear of the loss of PFC Barrett Austin, but we are honored to name a lifesaving dog "Barrett" to carry on the heroic legacy of PFC Austin. MDD *Barrett* will be performing a similar role of locating landmines and other explosives, and will work to ensure that men, women, and children can move about freely in Iraq without fear of injury or death from dangerous devices.

MDD *Barrett* is working with MLI's partner in southern Iraq, the [Iraqi Mine and UXO Clearance Organization \(IMCO\)](#), and is one of 12 MDDs that MLI has donated to IMCO since 2010. MLI is very grateful to have the strong support of the U.S. Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) and the many private donors who have supported this program.

[Please click below to view a video of MDD Barrett training in Iraq](#)



[Survivors' Assistance Program:](#) [A Letter from a Survivor](#)

The Marshall Legacy Institute's (MLI) Survivors' Assistance programs around the world continue to improve the lives of thousands of landmine survivors. Last year, one of the children MLI helped was a young boy named Mohammad, who lost both of his arms and his eye in a landmine explosion when he was just 10 years old. MLI's President, Perry Baltimore, met Mohammad several years ago when he was visiting Yemen on a program assessment visit and was struck by this young man's positive spirit, despite his lost limbs and eyesight. Last October, MLI honored Mohammad at our annual Clearing the Path Gala with the Survivors' Assistance award.



Mohammad in the U.S. last Fall, practicing with one of his new prosthetic arms/hands.

With the assistance of generous donors, Mohammad was able to not only fly to the U.S. to receive the award, but remained in America for nearly two months so that he could be fitted with functional prosthetic limbs at the Kennedy Krieger Institute, and have his eye examined for possible sight restoration in the future. The prosthetic arms/hands were very heavy and difficult for him to use at first, but he was determined to get stronger so that he would be able to use them effectively.

Over the past six months, Mohammad has been working diligently and is doing extremely well with his new arms/hands, which enable him to do many things that he could not do before. He is now at the top of his 7th grade class and recently sent the email below to MLI's President to share his great progress:

"Dear Mr. Perry,

I am writing this email to you by myself using my prosthetic hands and Mr. Alawi is helping me in translation.

I just finished my exam today after hard homework and I am sure that I will succeed. Regarding my prosthetic hands, I am using them every day and when I feel tiredness, I start to remember all your efforts for me to get the prosthetics. Then I wear them and day by

day I started feeling comfortable.

Thank you very much and thanks for all people who assisted me to get prosthetic hands. Please see the attached picture of me taking by Mr. Alawi during writing this letter. My best regards to all MLI staff.

Mohammed"

MLI is so grateful to supporters like you who have enabled us to help the many men, women, and children, like Mohammad, who have been injured by landmines. Thank you for your support!

Mohammad in the US last Fall, learning to use his new limbs



June 8, 2013 - Mohammad in Yemen, using his prosthetic arms/hands to do his schoolwork

[Check out this new video on YouTube about MLI's programs around the world!](#)





MLI was given the Guidestar Seal for our Commitment to Transparency



MLI was given the top rating by independent Charity rating system, Charity Navigator



Many thanks for your ongoing support as we work towards creating a safer and better world for all people and animals.

Warm regards,

The MLI Team

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