

# Veteran's Day: Not just for humans



**A painting of Weston Kendall and his dog, Bram, was displayed on the Second Chance Pet Society's float in the Veteran's Day Parade Friday afternoon. After serving in the military as a working dog, Bram passed away at the age of 15 on Oct. 10.**

When we think of Veteran's Day, most of us don't usually think of a dog. That's not the case for Weston Kendall, a former Staff Sergeant Air Force K9 Handler and native of Phillipsburg.

Kendall enlisted in the Air Force in June 1999 and later graduated from the Department of Defense K9 Handler's Course in San Antonio, Texas, in 2002. He received orders to McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita for December, 2002 and that's when his path crossed with Military Working Dog Bram.

Bram, a Belgium Malinois, was born on Jan. 26, 1997 and was selected by the military as a patrol and explosive detector dog. After completing his initial training in San Antonio, Texas to be a patrol and explosive detector dog, Bram was assigned to McConnell Air Force Base. Bram was approximately eight months old when he began his military career and quickly excelled as one of McConnell's top dogs. Bram was four years old when he was teamed up with Kendall.

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.

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 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.



**Maynard Wilnert**



**Eddie Whitney**



**David Cuthbertson**



**Jake Durham**



**(Left) Lee Ann Shearer and Ruth Schillig of the Cedar Ridge 4-H Club show their support for Veterans in the Veteran's Day parade Friday afternoon.**




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215 South Kansas Avenue, Norton, Kansas 67654  
Phone: (785) 877-3361; Fax: (785) 877-3732  
E-mail: nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

