MWDs and CWDs: A COMPARISON

MWDs and CWDs work alongside one another protecting both US and Coalition Forces in all areas. They bring life-saving capability to the fight against Terrorism regardless of the initials (MWD or CWD) which precede their names.

OWNERSHIP ★

CWDs are owned/trained by private companies and are contracted by the Department of Defense (DoD) to work in the same areas of operation performing the same jobs as MWDs.

MWDs are owned by the DoD and assigned to the various military services.

DEPLOYMENTS ★

CWDs are owned by private contractors and not the DoD. They are sent overseas by the private contractors and most times they are attached to our Military Units or assigned to other areas as needed. In many cases, CWDs do not return home from combat zones until they are ready to retire.

MWDs are trained at Lackland Air Force Base and then sent to operational units throughout the DOD. They range in age from 1 year to 13 years of age, and include both males and females, although they are spayed or neutered before being adopted. (This has been a HUGE issue that people think happens)

HANDLERS ★

CWDs Many handlers are prior Military or Law Enforcement K9 Handlers from the U.S.or foreign handlers from other countries. CWDs change handlers frequently within the contract company therefore many of their handlers are unable to be located.

MWDs Can have the same Active Duty Military K9 Handlers for a few years, but depending on circumstances, they can be assigned a new handler at any given time. Many MWDs have multiple handlers throughout their entire career due to the changes in Military members statuses.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS ★

CWDs
- Explosive Detection (EDD)
- Narcotics Detection (NDD)
- Patrol/Explosive Detection (PEDD)
- Patrol/Narcotics Detection (PNDD)
- Improvised or Tactical Explosive Detection (IDD, TEDD)

MWDs
- Explosive Detection (EDD)
- Narcotics Detection (NDD)
- Patrol/Explosive Detection (PEDD)
- Patrol/Narcotics Detection (PNDD)
- Specialized Search Detection (SSD) and Combat Trackers (CTD)

BREEDS UTILIZED

CWDs and MWDs: German Shepherd, Belgian Malinois, Labrador Retriever, Springer Spaniel, and occasionally a mixed breed or other sporting/ herding breed dog.

MEDICAL CARE ★

CWDs While under contract with the DoD, medical care is provided by a DoD Veterinary Treatment Facility. The amount of care is not mandated and depends on the Contract Company and the Kennel Master. When the contract ends, veterinary care is the responsibility of the Contract company. Should a CWD retire in country with a “local national” handler, private veterinary care in the Middle East is almost non-existent.

MWDs Amazing medical care is provided by the DoD until retirement, then no medical benefits are provided.

RETIREMENT ★

CWDs many times are retired around the ages of 7-10 years unless they have suffered injuries or have a medical condition that will hinder the performance of their duties.

MWDs are retired around 10-12 years of age unless they have suffered injuries or have a medical condition that will hinder the performance of their duties.

ADOPTION ★

Retired CWDs may be adopted by their former handlers or civilians. Some contractors bring retired dogs home to the U.S., others do not want to bear the expense of bringing the dogs home and will sell, “farm” them out, adopt them out to local nationals or worse. Adoptive families must bear the cost of transporting these dogs home or they will reach out to organizations like Mission K9 Rescue to have us provide funding for the dogs to return to the U.S. if they choose to do so. Most of these dogs are not spayed or neutered prior to retirement.

Retired MWDs may be adopted by their former handlers, law enforcement or civilians. Applications are submitted to the Lackland Air Force Base MWD Adoption Program or the military base where the dog is retired. Former handlers or civilians adopting MWDs that are retired at bases overseas in the past have had to pay for the dogs to return to the U.S. A law has recently been passed requiring all MWDs be brought back to the United States from their overseas bases.
WHAT IS A MWD AND CWD?

A MWD is a Military Working Dog that is owned by the Department of Defense (DoD) and is trained at Lackland AFB in a specialty. A MWD is attached to a special unit and deploys and returns with their handler and unit. Unfortunately, MWDs are considered to be “equipment” therefore, if they are retired overseas (OCONUS), the DoD does not transport them back to the U.S. to be adopted by either their handler or civilians. That’s where MK9R comes in. We stand in the gap and step up the meet the immediate need to bring these warriors home.

A CWD is a Contract Working Dog that is owned by a private company and is contracted by the DoD to work alongside our MWDs performing the same tasks protecting our troops. CWDs are not attached to a special unit, remains in active service and are reassigned to other areas where needed. Sadly, some Contract companies do not bring these warriors back when they are retired so they wait for someone to hear about them, adopt them and pay the costs to bring them home. Once again, MK9R stands in the gap to assist in adoption and the transport to bring these warriors home as well.

MK9R is COMMITTED to our nation’s working dog heroes to ensure they are not forgotten for their service to our country and communities.