



Super Dogs

AKA Bio-Sensor

Webmasters Comment: The Army attempted to breed a super dog in the late 60s. The program was managed by the head of the Army Vet Corp (Colonel Castleberry), located at Walter Reed Medical Center, DC. German Shepherds share a genetic hip disorder that is common in all large breeds--hip dysplasia. This disorder crippled and eliminated many dogs from military service. It became hard to acquire decent German Shepherds as the puppy mills bred for volume not quality. The size of the American bred German Shepherd decreased over the years.

The results of the experiment arrived at the Lackland Dog School in the early 70's. The Army called the dogs Bio-Sensor, we called them Super Dogs. The Army had closed down its scout dog program and no longer needed the dogs.

The dogs resembled a German Shepherd, but most had a far away look in their eyes. The initial litters had been raised in a kennel environment. When the dogs were exposed to common elements of an outside environment (birds, grass, etc), they were afraid, confused and skittish. Instructors of one class with several of these dogs demonstrated how the dogs refused to cross a line painted on the pavement. Other Instructors joked with them about how cheap it would be to kennel them. All you had to do was paint a circle around a doghouse.

Later litters were taken outside to run and play in a fenced in obstacle course area. This was an attempt to socialize them to the outdoors. Many of these dogs then associated a obstacle course as a play area and could not be controlled easily off leash.

The dogs that were trainable did exhibit superior intelligence. Some would learn very quickly, then become bored unless the training problems became more complex. However, many were unable to complete the training. Dogs washed out of patrol dog classes were entered into sentry dog classes. After several more unsuccessful attempts to train them, they were put to sleep. The expense of breeding these particular dogs was several thousand dollars each. The dogs would not be released to the public after being exposed to aggression training due to liability reasons. Dogs that were not trainable were destroyed. At this time, the DOD Dog Center was purchasing German Shepherds for only a few hundred dollars.

A breeding program that was successful was developed by the Australian government. Even in the 70's, the Australian military was breeding dogs for military and police use. In 1998, Australian Customs donated foundation breeding stock and methodology to U.S. Customs to enable them to enhance their detector dogs program. Since research began for the Customs selective breeding program, hundreds have been bred. Auburn University received a multi-million dollar grant to develop a breeding program. Later, the program was sold to a private company. The DOD Dog Center developed a breeding program for military dogs. Puppies are placed in foster homes to raise them until they can start basic training. This removes them from the lab or kennel environment.



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