

The Quiet Americans!

A History of Military Working Dogs



*Awarded the AETC Excellence in History
Publications Award*

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37th Training Wing
Lackland AFB, Texas
15 December 2000**



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History

The call of modern warfare as the Gulf war demonstrated in 1991, exemplified our use of the most sophisticated, technology advanced equipment that the US could procure to bring swift and decisive victory for a just cause. To this end, the US had in the past, expended every available resource to meet the ultimate goal. But although the face of war changed, some fundamental tools and weapons used have not. As a matter of fact, the US followed certain paths laid out by the ancient peoples of Persia and Assyria with their use of four-legged technology in warfare.

Canines or ‘wardogs’ were used in warfare throughout history supporting combat operations. Long before the invention of gunpowder, dogs were gathered in columns, many of them clad in mail armor and spiked collars by the military forces of the Roman Empire. The English were known to have equipped their dogs with long spikes placed over their heads and had them charge forward to attack the enemy’s Calvary. Britain also employed the use of Mastiffs in 55 BC to fight Caesar’s invading armies. Napoleon was probably the first one to make use of the dog’s superior senses by chaining them to the walls of Alexandria,

using them to warn of an impending attack. The borders of Dalmatian, a Croatian seaside province, used Dalmatian type dogs (home of the Dalmatian) to warn of approaching Turks from Croatia.¹



Dalmatian

The United States did not make extensive use of dogs prior to 1942. Up until that point, Germany was the dominant user of dogs. The Germans trained them for scout duty with infantry patrols. However, their primary job was to use their superior senses to give warning of an enemy’s approach. The dogs were also used to ferry messages between front line fighters and headquarters to the rear of the fighting.²

¹ Ppr, Alvin P. Stauffer Jr., “The War Dog Program,” 1943.

² *Ibid.*

The Belgians and Russians followed closely behind Germany in their use of military dogs. The French used dogs for transportation purposes mainly with light carts carrying food and supplies. France had one canine training center, the Army Kennel for casualty dogs, at Fontainebleau. It was rumored that the French government encouraged the experimental use of dogs in areas other than rescue. In all, many European countries continued with use of dogs in one form or another up until the start of World War I. Germany had, by far, the most experience with training dogs for war. However, France and Great Britain made greater use of them as messengers during WWI than Germany. The advantages of using the four-legged messengers were too plentiful to ignore. The animals were less likely to get captured than a human messenger, and less likely to get shot. Furthermore, sets of dogs were trained to run along the front lines and others to run to the back of the fighting to deliver messages.³

At the start of World War I, America had no program for training dogs, or for that matter, using dogs in any capacity. The Quartermaster Corps of the Army had responsibility for procuring horses and mules. Riding horses were purchased for the cavalry for the purpose of training officers. Draft horses hauled field artillery and pack mules were used to carry supplies in areas with no roads (such as in Alaska and the Philippines). During WWI, the Remount services procured over 500,000 horses and mules, but failed to procure a suitable number of riding horses. To this end, the Remount branch of the Army began a special breeding program to secure the better breeds needed by the Army. The Army distributed the better stallions among civilian breeders for the program. Even though the civilians would own the offspring, the Army would use this as a 'reservoir' for horses in an emergency.⁴

The first modern push for the use of dogs in the military had purely patriotic origins. In the late 1930's and early forties, many influential breeders had formed groups to urge the military to use dogs. One of the most famous groups was "Dogs for Defense," led by a group of professional breeders, they came into being immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Along with help from the American Kennel club, the group aimed their goals at promotion,

³ Ppr, Alvin P. Stauffer, Jr., "Animals for Military Use," 1946.

⁴ *Ibid.*

coordination and financial assistance to develop a large trained canine force for use in civilian plants and in the Army if the call ever came.⁵

Without the formation of this group, the military might have had a harder time starting its program. As it stood, the Dogs for Defense group had an efficient organization for procuring and training dogs from across the wide spectrum of canine groups that existed. This fact was not lost on Colonel Russell A. Osmun, Chief of the Plant Protection and Public Relations Branch of the Office of the Quartermaster General. Colonel Osmun, who had a long time interest in the use of dogs in the Army, was instrumental in starting the instruction of dogs for sentry duty at the Quartermaster installations on the West Coast. The first East Coast military establishment to receive sentry dogs was Fort Hancock, New Jersey. Then commanding officer General F.S. Gage reported that due to the fact that the base was practically blacked out at night, with a sentry and a dog, it was like having two sentries on guard.⁶

North Africa was the proving ground for the Quartermaster Corps' use of canines on the battlefield. On 8 November 1942, before setting out to sea, the 3rd Battalion, 30th Infantry, 3d Division obtained dogs from Front Royal, Virginia, the Quartermaster Remount section. While on board ship, the handlers met their charges for the first time and immediately engaged in last minute training. On D-Day the dogs were extremely gun shy as they cowered in fear from the munitions exploding around them. But once they began their sentry duty on the battle lines, the dogs were praised with being far more alert and responsive than their handlers. Major Charles E. Johnson, 3rd Battalion commander, recommended that future dogs be exposed to sounds from the battlefield while still in training. He hoped that this would acclimate the dogs to the harsh sounds of battle so they would not be frightened by it during actual conflict.⁷

Unfortunately, due to the large demand for dogs the U.S. entry into the war created the Dogs for Defense group was woefully unable to keep up the pace. In June 1942, the Army transferred control of the procurement and training of dogs to the Remount Branch, Service

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Ppr, Alvin P. Stauffer Jr., "The War Dog Program," 1943.

⁷ William F. Ross and Charles f. Romanus, "The Quartermaster Corps: Operations In The War Against Germany," 1965, pp. 236-7.

Installations Division. Previously the Remount Branch had responsibility for procuring horses and mules for military service, so they were in good condition to switch up their procedures to procure dogs. The first large request for dogs came on July 1 from Camp Hale in Colorado, which requested over 100 dogs for use as messenger, sledge and scout dogs.⁸

Military Police with Sentry Dogs, Douglas Army Airfield, 1943



War Dog Breeds. By late 1942, the Army had set many standards for the training of dogs and handlers. They had also set the list of acceptable breeds:

MWD BREEDS

Airedale Terriers	Belgian Sheep dogs	Bouvier de Flandre	Boxers
German Short Haired Pointers	Flat Coated Retrievers	Chesapeake Bay Retrievers	Curly Coated Retrievers
Norwegian Elkhounds	Wire Haired Pointing Griffons	Boxers	Bull Mastiffs
Giant Schnauzers	Irish Water Spaniels	Labrador Retrievers	Collies
Rottweilers	Standard Poodles	Wire	Briards
Doberman Pinschers	Dalmatians	German Shepherds	Any cross breeds of these types

War Dog Program. In early 1943, James M. Austin organized the War Dog program. The War Dog program helped relieve the huge financial burden undertaken by the Dogs for Defense network. With this new program, public donations would give dogs the honorary rank

⁸ Ppr, Alvin P. Stauffer, Jr., "Animals for Military Use," 1946.

of seaman or private, while larger amounts conferred correspondingly higher grades. This popular, patriotic program helped raise much needed funds to assist the Dogs for Defense network.⁹

By July 1943, over 11,000 dogs had been procured, with most of them coming from the Dogs for Defense. The first War Dog reception and training center was established at Front Royal, Virginia in August of 1942. The completion of this center allowed for the training of 200 men and 500 dogs. But the enormous influx of dogs pushed these numbers up to 400 men and 900 dogs by June of 1943. Other reception and training centers included Fort Robinson, Camp Rimini, San Carlos, Beltsville and Cat Island.¹⁰

War Dog Training. The training of the dogs was divided into eight distinct areas:

Sentry Dogs: These dogs were trained to assist in guard duty at arsenals, ammunition



dumps, ration depots, and water works. In all instances the dogs were worked on leashes and were used primarily to warn the sentry of the presence of trespassers.

Attack dog training, circa 1943

Attack Dogs: Early in the canine program these dogs were limited in production, as time did not permit their full training. But the Coast Guard was of belief that these dogs would be more valuable in beach patrols or in any situation where trespassers might be at a distance from the sentry and that these dogs would be good in the apprehension of ‘undesirable persons.’

Tactical Dogs: Initially, the training of tactical dogs was done on experimental bases. Training involved dogs used in combat situations, something the Army was still not sure of. It was a common belief that these dogs could not be used in tropical areas due to the diseases and parasites that existed there. There was enough of a demand for these dogs to conduct training on

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Ppr, Alvin P. Stauffer Jr., “The War Dog Program,” 1943.

Cat Island, 100 miles southeast of Nassau Island in the Bahamas. Experimentation with these dogs included use of camouflage and gas masks for them.

Silent Scout Dogs: Scout dogs were trained as tactical dogs to give silent warning to their handlers of the presence of enemy troops. This they did by their ability to detect the wind blown scent of individuals or groups. They were used in reconnaissance and combat patrols outposts and static security groups. Their training was much like the sentry dogs with the exception of the fact that they were trained not to bark or growl loudly.

Messenger Dogs: Messenger dogs were trained to deliver messages on the battlefield as they were swift, sure of foot and could find their way in any type of weather. Most of the dogs trained were at or below 15 inches in height and weighing 15 pounds or less. A prime factor with the training of these dogs was their ability to execute their duties under battle conditions. Typically, two master-trainers were used in the training of these dogs, as the dogs were motivated by their anxiety to please the men by running between two points where the men were located.

Casualty Dogs: Dogs trained to aid the medical corps in finding wounded soldiers on the battlefield and find injured individuals in debris caused by bombings.

Sledge Dogs: Dogs trained to find downed airmen in the Army Air Forces in snow bound regions inaccessible by normal means.

Pack Dogs: These dogs were trained to transport loads of up to 40 pounds. They would be able to work with field units in carrying small machine guns, ammunition and food. Only 92 of these types were ever trained and none were ever used as no requisitions for this type of dog had ever been received.



**Dogs and
Trainers at
Douglas Army
Airfield, 1943**

Korean War. By the end of World War II, the military war dog program shrank to six platoons, all of which returned to the states. Of the six, the 26 Infantry Scout Dog Platoon remained active at Fort Riley, Kansas while the others were disbanded. The platoon was organized with a commanding officer, platoon sergeant, veterinarian, eighteen dog handlers and twenty-seven dogs. By then the Army chose its breed of choice, the German Sheppard. This because the breed proved itself well in the past and were considered good workers, easy to train and the supply was plentiful.¹¹

¹¹ Manuscript, Cpt Briscoe W. Pierce and Lt. Col A.S. Daley, "Observation on the Employment of the 26th Infantry Scout Dog Platoon in Korea, 21 Feb to 30 Oct 1952," 15 Feb 53.



U.S. Army 26th Infantry Dog team circa 1951

The 26th was used mostly for demonstration purposes around the country to show the effectiveness of dogs in the military.

They also went out on maneuvers with various infantry units.¹²

In May of 1951, one squad of the 26th left for Korea. The rest of the platoon arrived in Korea in January of 1952. Arriving in Pusan, the platoon was attached to the 40th Infantry Division. The squad that arrived earlier was attached to the 2d Infantry Division. By early 1953 the dog handler teams had logged over 400 patrols.

Standard protocol had the dog team in the lead with the patrol providing protection for the handler and dog. After the dog was alerted by the possible presence of the enemy, the dog team would be sent to the rear. Failure to do so sometimes resulted in the dog or handler becoming casualties. The dogs worked best on level ground up wind from any potential prey. Uneven terrain could tire the dog quickly and not make him as sensitive to his surroundings as necessary for the job. The dogs' ultimate pleasure of detecting and chasing his prey, as he does in training, is denied to him on patrols. It was also noted that dogs that stayed still for extended periods of time had a tendency to get restless and whine they worked best when on the move.¹³

Sentry dogs were ready for patrol every fourth night. It was discovered that the dogs could go 'stale' without the intermediate training sessions they worked at in-between patrols. The dogs also had a tendency to be gun shy, it took some time for them to get used to artillery

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

rounds. They worked well around small arms fire, but the larger artillery rounds caused them trepidation.¹⁴

Dog undergoing the ‘Gun Shy’ test with a .38 caliber pistol loaded with blanks. This test will show if the dogs can hold their own without covering away.



Vietnam War. In July of 1965, the Air Force sent sentry dog teams to Vietnam on a trial basis to determine how they would perform under tropical conditions. This program known as Top Dog 45 had many in the Air Force hierarchy in doubt that the dogs would be of any use due to the tropical climates. However, directives to the major commands in July of 1965 had them assemble 40 handlers and 40 dogs at Lackland AFB for 120 days temporary duty in Vietnam. The trial bases for the dogs were at Tan Son Nhut, Bien Hoa and Da Nang. The dogs adapted well and proved extremely valuable in protecting installations from infiltrators. At the end of the trials the handlers returned to the states and the dogs remained behind with qualified handlers.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Roger P. Fox, “Air Base Defense in the Republic of Vietnam 1961-73,” 1979, pp. 100-105.



Air Force Sentry Dog Team, Vietnam

Heat was the biggest problem facing the dog teams in country. When the dogs were no longer able to control their temperature, death occurred. Because of this, the handlers wisely cut back the recurrent training times and conducted them in the evenings when it was cooler. Initially the dogs lived in the kennels they were shipped overseas in, eventually, civil engineers and civilian contractors built dog kennels that kept the dogs in better facilities than their handlers had. ¹⁶

The ultimate measure of success for the sentry dog in Vietnam was to fill the gap in protection of aircraft and airmen. If and when a dog gave a warning, this tactical security screen bought time for backup defenders to take up any fight. The dogs were deployed primarily at night where their superior senses made up for the handlers not being able to see very far. The Vietcong actually respected the dogs as a viable threat and realized that they had to give the animals as wide a berth as possible to avoid being caught trying to infiltrate U.S. bases. To avoid being detected, enemy reconnaissance personnel were instructed to coat their bodies with an herb (toi) to cut back on the chance that any dog could smell them at a distance. As stated by the former DOD Military Working Dog Program Manager E.A. Hilburn, “In Vietnam, no guerrilla force has ever penetrated a sentry dog manned post undetected.” However, on 4 December 1966 a Vietcong strike team penetrated the first defensive boundary at Tan Son Nhut air base. They were spotted trying to get past the second sentry dog team and a fight ensued in which the sentry dogs sustained their first casualties. One handler and three dogs were killed, however, one of sentry dog teams that voiced the initial alarm were both injured in the fight. The dog, Nemo, would become a symbol of canine heroism for America, as he saved the life of his

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

injured handler by engaging the enemy after he, himself was shot. Sentry dog teams at other bases proved their worth during the conflict by finding the enemy long before they could do any damage to U.S. resources.¹⁷



A2C Leonard Bryant and Nemo on patrol at Tan Son Nhut AB, Vietnam 1966

The last sentry dog to fall during the war was killed on a January 1969 attack on Phan Rang. The loyalty and service of the sentry dogs was unquestioned, they proved their worth many times over. Between 1965 and 1973 over 4,500 dogs were sent to serve in Vietnam.¹⁸

But in 1966, a major change was about to take place. Four sentry dog teams from Andrews AFB were given patrol dog training by the Washington D.C. Metropolitan police department. This was

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

done to show the Air Force the benefits of using patrol dogs as opposed to sentry dogs. For all of the advantages of a well-trained sentry dog, they had many limitations. Sentry dogs were trained to attack and hold on to predators. In all cases, the dogs were trained to protect their handlers, so that if the handlers were injured, it was extremely difficult for anyone one to assist them. This was due to the training the sentry dogs received; they would respond to one handler and distrust everyone else. This proved a bonus while in the field were the keen senses of a dog would detect a potential enemy long before the handler. Another limitation of the sentry dog was the 'reconditioning' time.



Dog aggressor training, circa 1980

If a handler was transferred, it could take weeks of retraining for a new handler to gain the trust of the dog. With these limitations, the Air Force opted for a better, more versatile type of dog. In 1968, sentry dog teams from Strategic Air Command

went to the Metropolitan Police department for training. The teams then participated in a 120-day field evaluation exercise where they performed far above expectations in all areas. The usefulness and versatility of the patrol dog could not be ignored.¹⁹

The extensive training that both the dog and the handler go through produces an unmatched team that can go into any situation. Patrol dogs are trained to find suspects in large crowds, ride in patrol cars without showing hostility towards people or other dogs; to cease any attack upon a command from the handler; and to attack without command when the handler is attacked. August of 1969 saw the Sentry Dog Training Branch become the Military Working Dog Training Branch, training patrol dogs for the Air Force and still training sentry dogs for other agencies.²⁰

¹⁹ Fact Sheet, USAF #87-10, "Military Working Dogs," Feb 87; Ppr, "Patrol Dog," no date; AFNS, "AF Sentry Handlers Progress In Converting Dogs To Patrol," Kelly Observer, no date, p. 27; "Sentry Dogs Change Signals; Retrain for Perimeter Duty," Kelly Observer, 21 Jun 69, p.14.

²⁰ See note above.



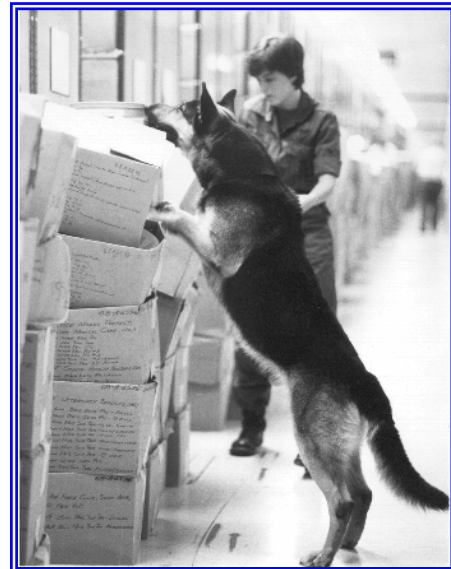
The Air Force trains dogs for all branches of the military including U.S. Customs

Drug Dogs

In an effort to stem the flow of marijuana in use by military personnel in Southeast Asia, a drug detection course was started in 1971. The dogs selected were curiosity driven and had exceptional eagerness to retrieve items. Initial tests with the canines pitted them against marijuana that was stored in

Drug Detection Dog and handler

glass jars and sealed plastic bags, neither of which were able to deter the dog from finding them. Even when the drugs were mixed with other substances the dogs were still able to find them. With the success of the canines sniffing out marijuana, the program extended to the harder drugs of cocaine and heroin. The dogs proved that they could sniff these out just as well as marijuana.²¹



Recruitment for dogs continued into the realm of small dogs such as Beagles and Cairn Terriers. The Navy was the prime target for Beagles as they were extremely useful onboard ships. The Air Force made use of Cairn Terriers for their intelligence and size. Not only could they get into places that the larger breeds could not, but they were easier to care for when it came to the support facilities needed for them.²²

²¹ Jim Sandefur, "Training 'Man's Best Friend,'" *Airman*, (Oct 83), pp 9-18.

²² "Max Dogs Drug Users," *Air Force Times*, 5 Apr 76, p. 37; "Small Dogs Proving Worth," *Air Force Times*, 24 May 76, p. 61; Ppr, USAF News Release #11-1, 3 Nov 75.



Lackland Detachment 37 Personnel with “Small Dogs”

The U.S. Customs Department initially received their dogs from Lackland. After the military began their studies in the use of dogs for drug detection, the customs department took an active role in recruiting dogs from Lackland for their use. With the expansion and

success of the dog program to detect all illegal drugs, the Customs Department dog training broke away from Lackland in 1974 to its current location in Front Royal, Virginia. This was the former home of the U.S. Cavalry Remount Station of the Quartermaster General. During the early 1970’s, U.S. Custom dogs screened more than 80,000 vehicles and better than six million pieces of cargo. In 1999 the canine corps searched over 220 million packages and people with 11,000-drug and currency detection’s.²³

Also in 1971, the Air Force began training dogs to detect explosives. The lead was taken from the British who had already had a standing force of bomb sniffing canines for work in



Northern Ireland. The dogs proved more than capable for the task of detecting explosives. During tests, dogs were able to detect concentrations as small as two parts per billion; some dogs detected concentrations too small to measure.²⁴

Bomb Detection Dog, circa 1995

²³ Ppr, U.S. Customs Service, “History of the Canine Enforcement Training Center,” 24 May 00.

²⁴ Jim Sandefur, “Training ‘Man’s Best Friend,” *Airman*, (Oct 83), pp 9-18.

The use of dogs in detecting bombs started in the early 1940's. Mine sniffing dogs were used in Northern Africa, employed there to detect mines in fields used by the Germans. The dogs, however, proved unable to do the job. In two different tests run, the dogs were able to find only 51% and 46% of the mines planted. These dogs had been trained in the United States and were said to have been excellent bomb detectors, however the conditions in which the dogs worked in Northern Africa were said to have affected the dogs in a negative way. The same proved true of bomb dogs trained in Britain and used in Northern Africa.²⁵

Acquisition

From 1942 when the Quartermaster general started accepting donated dogs into the War Dog program, the primary procurement practice had relied on this practice of public donation to maintain the program. The Dog Center had depended rather heavily on the USAF Recruiting Service for their support in getting the word out to the general public on the military's need for dogs.

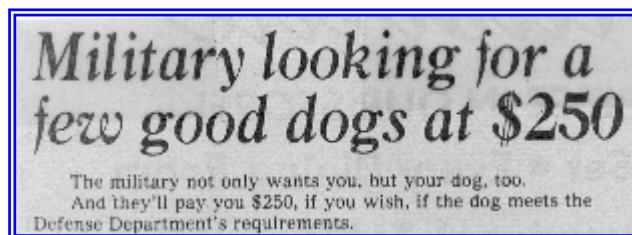
Add for dogs in Milwaukee paper, 1982



However, in 1968 the demand for trained canines was far beyond what Air Force Logistics Command (AFLC) could maintain on donations alone and the Dog Center went on the road to procure dogs. They still maintained the support ties with the Recruiting Service,

but the support was now formalized with financial support from AFLC.²⁶

Add for dogs, circa 1980



²⁵ Ppr, Alvin P. Stauffer, Jr., "Animals for Military Use," 1946.

²⁶ Memo, C.D. Anderson, Chief Plans & Programs Branch Directorate of Material Management to Mr. Enderia, "Procurement of Military Working Dogs (Your letter 10 Jul 68), Jul 68.

The procurement teams would designate a specific geographic area and begin with advertising in the local media first. The teams would solicit area kennels and the general public for dogs, specifically for the German Sheppard breeds. Local Air Force Bases were the typical focal point for the public to bring their canines. Up until the late 1970's the Dog Center would pay up to \$150 for a dog, this went up in the early 1980's to \$250 and in the same decade up to \$450.

While the height and weight requirements for dogs have not changed much through time, the Dog Center preferred only certain breeds. As of 1999, the German Shepherd, Belgian Malinois and the Dutch Shepherd were the preferred breed for certain types of training. Retrievers such as Labrador, Golden and Chesapeake Bay make up the class of preferred breeds for those that will not be trained to go on patrol duty.²⁷

The demand for dogs has remained high since the programs' early days. One reason for the demand is the high wash out rate. In 1981 the center received 802 new dogs with only 332 making the grade. Any number of reasons were attributed to the low rates including medical and temperament disqualifications. Another reason for the high demand for these animals is their dual role as patrol and narcotic work. Recent times, however, have not seen many dogs donated to the program from the general public.²⁸

²⁷ Ppr, Department of Defense Military Working Dogs, Statement of Work Potential Military Working Dogs 341st Training Squadron, 7 Jun 00.

²⁸ Mack Sisk, "Air Force recruits are treated like dogs," The San Antonio Light, 27 Dec 81.



Circa 1980

In 1975 the Air Force, again, put out a call for small dogs into the program. Up until this point, the Navy sought small dogs, specifically beagles for use upon ships. Small dogs did not require the space that the typical German Shepherd did. The ‘little sniffers,’ were to be trained as narcotic and explosive detector dogs. Initial procurement breeds included the Miniature Schnauzer, Cairn and Fox Terriers and the Beagles.²⁹

The DOD Dog Center maintained a ‘mail-in program’ until 1984. The program worked by allowing individuals who wanted to sell their dog to the government to undergo a telephone interview conducted by the Dog Center staff. If the interview went well, the prospective seller

²⁹ Press Release, Office of Information, San Antonio Air Logistics Center, Kelly AFB, Texas #11-1, “DOD Dog Center...,” 3 Nov 75.

would then take their dog to a veterinarian for a physical checkup. The initial examination was done at the individual's expense. If the exam went well, the owner would send the examination paperwork along with a photograph of the dog to the Dog Center for evaluation. If the Center accepted the dog, they would send a crate to the owner by commercial truck and the owner shipped the dog to the Dog Center by commercial airline, all of this was done at government expense.³⁰

A special study conducted by the Directorate of Distribution's corporate board revealed surprising results:

In 1984 the Center had evaluated a total of 931 dogs through the mail in program. Of these, 510 passed their preliminary examinations, whereupon their owners shipped them to the Center. However, of this total the center ultimately accepted only 91 for entry into the training program. This represented only 18 percent of the total sent, and only 10 percent of the total to undergo an evaluation of any sort. The small number of dogs accepted, combined with the various expenses involved, resulted in an average cost of \$3,222.07 per dog accepted. This compared unfavorably with the previous year, when the center bought 178 dogs, at an average cost of \$1,412.17 per animal.³¹

The decision was made to require owners to take their animals to a nearby military installation rather than allowing civilian veterinarians to examine the dogs. This procedure allowed for an immediate evaluation of the dogs and saved the government the expense of round trip transportation for the animals.

Forever the quiet Americans...

During the Gulf War, the French military put a lot of stock in the use of military working dogs. They deployed over 1,000 highly trained German Shepherds into the conflict to help protect their resources. The Air Force was the first of the American forces to bring the working dogs on scene.

The First Fighter Wing at Langley AFB were the first to deploy working dogs in theater. TSgt Tim Kelly, a former handler with the 1st TFW stated, "As for the heat [in Saudi], when we first arrived, we only worked nights, patrolling around the aircraft and flight line." The heat was

³⁰ Ppr, DOD Dog Center, "DOD Working Dog Center," no date.

³¹ *Ibid.*

a major factor in using canines in southwest Asia. All handlers carried extra water for the dogs while out on patrol.³²

With the threat of chemical warfare, initial plans were incorporated with using poncho's to protect the dogs in case of attack. The dogs would then be airlifted out of theater as soon as



possible. While gas masks for dogs had been designed back in World War II, it was found to be not so very practical as dogs would be unable to use their two main resources of smell and attacking with the masks on.³³

WW II Canine Gas Mask

The 118th Military Police Company in Rafha, Saudi Arabia had dogs deployed during the war and had atropine auto-injectors ready for the dogs in case of chemical attack by any type of nerve agent. Like their Air Force counterparts, the plan of action was to get the dogs under cover and then get them out of country.³⁴

The kennel master of the 1st Fighter Wing from Langley made the most out of the hostile conditions of the desert to assist the dogs and the handlers. Comments from Army military police companies favored the Air Force's unique solutions to helping the dog's acclimatize to the region by quickly equipping the dogs' tents with air conditioning units and moving the bulk of the work of the dogs to night time hours as was done during Vietnam. Captain Mark J. Martinez, Commander of the 248th Medical Detachment (Veterinary Services) stated that, "There was no standard plan for constructing field kennel facilities in this [desert] environment, we saw a lot of improvisation [by the Air Force] but there wasn't any plan." As the standard operating environment was in Europe, many changes had to be made to prepare for work in southwest Asia.³⁵

³² E-Mail, Tim Kelly 62MSS/DPMPs to Tracy L. English 37TRW/HO, "Back in Saudi...", 25 May 00.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Ppr, Oral History Interview DIST AE 058, SSgt LaDonna Kirkland 116th Military History Det with SSgt James L. Leach 118th Military Police Company, "Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm," 8 Feb 91.

³⁵ Ppr, Oral History Interview DSIT AE 099, Maj Robert B. Honec, III with Cpt Mark J. Martinez 248th Medical Detachment (Veterinary Services), "Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm," 3 Jun 91.



Bomb Dog Detection team, Saudi Arabia

In 1999, Military Working Dogs in use today supported the Peace Support Operations act as ‘force multpliers.’ They expanded individual soldier’s effectiveness ten fold in the face of the those that would come against them. They provided an immense psychological effect, using them as a ‘show of force’

in day to day operations. However, great restraint was used when dogs and their handlers are engaged with crowd control. Current regulations, in all services, restrict the use of a dog against an individual unless it is readily apparent that criminal behavior is occurring (theft, destruction of property or assault. Employing dogs in riot control situations proved difficult because of the high levels of confusion and excitement and the large numbers of potential antagonists. All of these factors can make proper employment of canines difficult.



Military Working Dog

Currently other countries involved with peace support operations make a wider range of use of their working dogs than American forces. They have effectively melded the use of dogs into every aspect of their missions. The dogs are used effectively at gates to camps and bases and checkpoints and are used from random searches to just being seen to defuse any potential problems.³⁶

A high operations tempo in 1999 was responsible for a working dog shortage in many areas, according to Bob Dameworth, the Department of Defense Military Working Dog program manager. Mr. Dameworth and his assistant were responsible for the taskings of over 1,200

³⁶ Maj Mike Albertson, “Use of Military Working Dogs in Peace Support Operations,” News from the Front!, Jun 98.

military working dogs across all service branches. Dameworth comments that, “we average about eight dogs per day, year round, being assigned to dignitary-protection missions.” These numbers are added to the typical day-to-day operational missions the dogs are involved with. Even though the U.S. Customs department has their own dog training school and drug detection dogs, they still make use of military dog units down on the Mexico / U.S. border. Every major command sends dogs down to the border on a rotating basis, where they work for a set period of time. This is the one place where dogs are routinely exposed to large quantities of illegal drug odors.³⁷

The preferred breed today for the Department of Defense Military Working Dog program was the Belgian Malinois. This breed shared many of the positive traits with the German Shepherd. They adapted easily and have very good prey/kill instincts. While some referred to these dogs as ‘living weapons,’ the main purpose of the animals was deterrence. What their human counterparts couldn’t see or hear, the canines could easily detect. Their controllable aggressive behavior and the pure psychological effects they possess make them and their handlers an impressive and unmatched team.



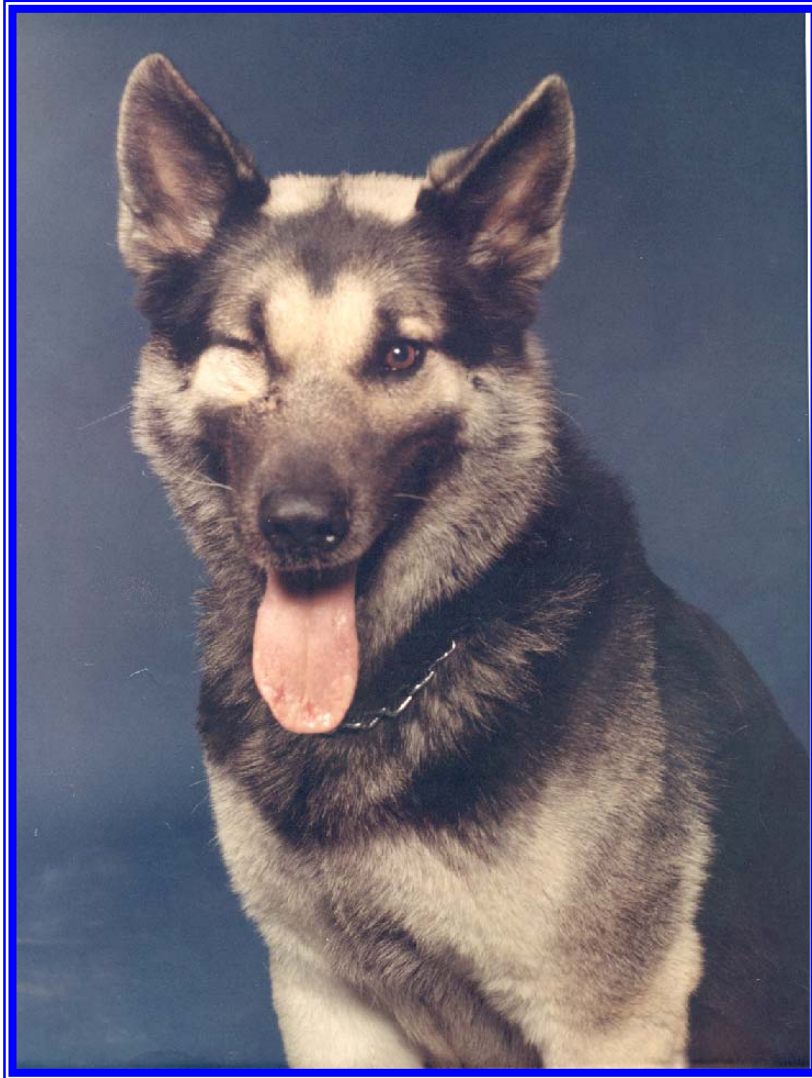
37 TRW MWD Team



341 TRS MWD Logo

³⁷SMSgt Denton Lankford, “High Ops tempo results in military working dog shortage,” *Air Force News*, May 99.

The Quiet American...



NEMO

On the night of 4 December 1966, “Nemo” and his handler, A2C Robert A. Throneberg, were patrolling the perimeter of Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Republic of Vietnam. Detecting a group of Viet Cong infiltrators, Nemo attacked. Both Nemo and Throneberg were wounded. However, Nemo was credited with saving his handler’s life. Nemo lost an eye because of the wounds he received that fateful night, but healed quickly and served out his tour in Vietnam. He was returned to the Military Working Dog Center on 22 July 1967, where he was treated to a hero’s welcome. Nemo was housed in a separate kennel at the school and enjoyed celebrity status until his death on 15 March 1973 at the ripe old age of eleven.

