



## MILITARY DOG TRAINING

In the 70's military dog received 6 hours of training a week (in theory). But realistically, training was a continuous program. Every command to the dog was followed with verbal & physical praise, every misbehavior was followed with a firm verbal or correction (but never physical abuse). Every thing depended on the dog's obedience to commands. Obedience training for patrol dogs included more off leash work than for sentry dogs.

The patrol dog was expected to be more tolerant towards non-dog handlers. Some patrol dogs would allow strangers to pet them, that was never a military requirement. The military concept "tolerance" was that the dog would not attack unless commanded or observed a physical threat on the handler. A Patrol dog could be worked in close proximity to friendly forces and not be distracted (as far as scouting ability). Sentry & Patrol dogs were expected to attack without command, if the handler was searching a person, and that person attempts to run or strike the handler. The military term for that action is "intelligent disobedience". Patrol dogs were required to release their "bite" on command, and stop a attack on command.

A Sentry dog was like a guided missile, once released the dog stopped when the dog had a mouthful of bad guy. A Sentry dog wanted to bite anyone other than his own handler. Some sentry dogs would attack their own handler, and it was an accepted risk by the handlers. Almost every kennels had at least one dog that was known to "turn on their handler". Most Sentry dogs would be more tolerant of another dog handler (with his dog), but that still required the other handlers to maintain a safe distance apart. The "well rounded" sentry dogs viewed all living creature other their handlers with suspicion.



Above Photo Courtesy of Bill Cummings, U-Tapao Sentry Dog Handler Circa 1970-1971

Obedience training for a military dog started at school and continued for the rest of his/her life. The purpose of these drills (with the dog at the end of the leash) was to teach a dog to stay when told to even around other dog teams. Marching drill movements accomplish the same thing, dogs must be able to be around other handlers and be on their best behavior. Dogs are also taken over the obstacle course (in background) on a regular basis. The obstacle course is for physical conditioning and reinforces the fact that the handler will never ask the dog to do something that is impossible.



Photo Above: Sentry Dog Team, Monty Moore & Kobuc  
Da Nang AB 1969

The obstacle course consisted of several hurdles of different heights, a log to walk the length of, a window to jump through, a stack of barrels (laid on their side), a tunnel, and a angled wall (with a platform on top). The dogs always seem to enjoy running the courses. Physical conditioning was important, but the confidence factor was even more important. The dog knew that it would never be asked the impossible. Several attempts may be needed. Verbal encouragement and physical praise would also follow.



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