

FROM: Lt Colonel Groves C. Johnson  
377th Security Police Sq  
APO San Francisco 96307

17 May 1967

TO: Colonel Robert J. Loughry  
AFISPM, Bldg Tempo E  
4th & Adams  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Bob,

During the attack of 4 and 5 December at Tan Son Nhut Air Base my K-9s and their handlers did, in my estimation, a very heroic job. One dog, Nemo, was especially good. In the encounter with the VC he was wounded and lost an eye. Unfortunately, to date he has not completely recovered and has a hole that is just below the eye extending through the roof of his mouth. It has healed; however, when he breathes hard another blood vessel ruptures and he must be put back on quarters. The veterinarian has not given up and plans to operate again in an effort to correct this.

Bob, this is truly a famous animal who has been credited with protecting and in fact saving the life of his seriously wounded handler during the attack. He's received quite a bit of publicity as well. Although he's been on quarters almost all the time since December, Nemo is still a very ferocious sentry dog. He is now almost 5 years old and weighs 95 pounds (a little more than usual because he lacks the exercise he get on duty).

My base commander and I feel this dog deserves some formal recognition. I understand that several years ago certain established channels were available for such recognition; however, they have since been rescinded. It is my hope that you could advise and perhaps assist us in our efforts.

Nemo's handler on 4 December was A1C Robert A. Thornberg, who is still recuperating in a USAF hospital at Tachikawa, Japan. All indications are however he will be returning to the States in the not too distant future to be discharged.

Nemo's original handler (then A1C) Leonard Bryant picked him up at Lackland, went to Fairchild AFB then brought him from the States in January 1966 and kept him until July 1966.

Nemo was originally sold to the Air Force by Samuel Cooks, Jr., an on-base resident of K.I. Sawyer AFB, Michigan.

Out here we are especially proud of Nemo. He is a constant reminder of the courage and heroic actions of our K-9s. I feel, though, that this could be exhibited even more and many could get to know and observe him if he were Stateside. I suggest perhaps a tour to recruit sentry dogs or maybe he could be donated to the Washington Zoo like Sockey the Bear.

I've attached some pictures of Nemo with his fan mail and his previous handlers. Also I included copies of his records.

I would appreciate any help you could give me on recognition of this animal and request your comments on my other suggestions.

You would hardly recognize this place now. We've come a long way in this past year. I'm proud of this group of fine young men.

Sincerely,

STERLING

Grove C. Johnson