

Long-Binh 1971

I had been in Viet-Nam about a week and a half when I was assigned to the 212th MP Co. Our mission was to guard the ammo dump at Long Binh. It was my third duty day and I was assigned to work post Whiskey-1. Late during the shift (about 2000) Poky had a strong alert. The problem was that it came from inside the dump. The nearby tower guard couldn't see anything and my radio didn't work. The only alternative was to pop a green star cluster. When Sgt Larson arrived, I explained the situation and that the alert was from "inside" the dump. I further stated that alerts were "not" supposed to happen this way.

With a response team in support, we followed up the alert. Poky followed the airborne scent to a berm (or reventment) about 50 meters away. Once there, he found a hole covered with some plywood and dirt. The hole was part of a 6 ft. shaft that led to a tunnel large enough for a man to stand up in. There were also bicycle tire tracks on the tunnel floor.

One night in Sep '71, Poky and I were working post Whiskey-5 at the Long-Binh ammunition dump. Just before 0500 hrs, Poky alerted on something at the far end of our post. As we followed up on the alert, the sounds of two girls singing came from outside the perimeter wire. As we approached the wire, we heard what sounded like church bells start to ring. After a few seconds, all sounds stopped and we were left with an eerie silence. I popped a green star cluster to signal our Sergeant of the Guard (SOG) and walked to the nearest tower. The tower guard didn't see or hear anything.

Later, after we were off duty, Sgt Larson told me a story: a few years ago, before the Tet '68 Offensive, there was a village for ARVN military dependents about a quarter mile across the wire from W-5. The village was attacked as a diversion for another operation the Viet-Cong had planned--the attack on the ammunition dump. The church bells were used as a signal to attack and they rang every morning at 0500 hrs. The singing girls were a mystery but Sgt Larson said the village was hit pretty hard and the dependents were moved to a more secure location.

SOMETHING FOR YOUR BOOK

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When a dog alerts on a intruder, he (or she) is trained to follow up the alert until the intruder or sapper is captured. This is not always the case. What Brandy did one night in Nov 1971, was more protective instinct than training, and it very likely saved my life.

I was in Long Thanh Detachment of the 212th MP Co and was assigned to perimeter security. During a routine patrol, Brandy (00A9) alerted in the direction of a small mound of dirt about 40 meters away. It peaked about 18 inches high, 4 feet wide, and was under the second row of concertina wire. Also, the perimeter lights were burned out at that particular location. As we followed up the alert, Brandy stopped, looked around at me and started wining. She never acted this way before and after two more times, I went to the closest bunker and told them what happened. They fired an M-79 and several M-60 rounds in the direction of the mound. Brandy started going crazy and we saw a shadowy figure crawling quickly away. Two bunkers tried setting up a crossfire.

Later, the quick reaction force found a blood trail and an abandoned pouch. I don't think they found the sapper. Brandy never reacted that way before or since. I think the bond between a handler and his dog produces a certain instinct that transcends training and conditioning. In his time Brandy's instincts told her that her partner was more important than that the intruder.

- CARRIED M-16
- FLAME JEST SCP
- MOTOROLA HANDHELD
- GREEN STAR CLUSTER
- 6-12-6 2 SHIFTS.

DAVID
FOHN

JOHN ELOPA