

MASTER
LESSON PLAN

INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT: Capabilities and Limitations of Scout Dogs

TYPE: Lecture/Discussion/Demonstration

TIME ALLOTTED: 100 minutes

CLASS PRESENTED TO:

TOOLS, EQUIPMENT, & MATERIAL: None

PERSONNEL: None

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS: I Squad (Scout Dogs & Handlers)

REFERENCE: Chapter 19 FM 21-75; Par 103 FM 20-20

STUDY ASSIGNMENT: None

STUDENT UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT:

TROOP REQUIREMENTS: Two (2) Squads Inf w/weapons, & One (1) ^{Sgt} Aggressor w/weapon.

1. PRESENTATION:

A. INTRODUCTION:

(1) Attention Step: By use of joke or gimmick appropriate to class gain attention. As you will learn during this class dogs are possessed of certain keen senses which make them an invaluable tool in counter-insurgency operations. Like any other specialized item of equipment, however, you must be thoroughly familiar with its operation before you can fully realize the benefits from it. Such is the case also with scout dogs.

(2) Objective: During this two hour block of instruction you will be given an understanding of the capabilities and limitations of scout dogs; what they are capable of doing, and what effect wind, weather, terrain and environment determines their effectiveness.

(3) Reason: Scout dogs have proven themselves effective in every theater of operations where they have ever been employed. In South Vietnam they have done well. But unlike most people suppose it is not the fault of the dog but rather the human element that is responsible for their care, training and utilization in the field. Therefore it is imperative that you know as much as you can about the capabilities and limitations of scout dogs for the very degree of education on this subject may possibly save your life if you should need to employ them.

B. EXPLANATION:

(1) Explain the capabilities of scout dogs:

a) The most important defense mechanisms of a scout dog to the military are his sense of smell, sound and sight.

1. Properly trained and employed under ideal conditions the average scout dog is capable of alerting on airborne human scent at great distances. However, even an alert of 30 meters is a life-saver under the most adverse conditions of human visibility.

2. But a scout dog's value is not limited only to his keen sense of smell. He is also capable of hearing sounds 40 times better than man. Calculated in terms of tactical value this means that a dog can foil an enemy trying to infiltrate your position by detecting sounds too faint for human ears; the scraping of clothing against brush, harsh breathing, the rasp of a sandal against a rock, the accidental clicking of a bolt; and even more remarkable is his ability to detect the presence of a trip wire in total darkness by the faintest of all sounds; sound waves by the vibration of the wire, or the scent of the booby, and associated human scent.

traps

b) A scout dog is also capable of detecting a foreign presence below, and above ground level.

c) He is capable of giving early silent warning of VC hiding in caves, canal banks, fox-holes, trees, jungles, forests, rice paddies, and even on occasion alert you to the presence of a well concealed man-trap.

d) He is capable of alerting on dead scent (positions recently vacated by the enemy); disclosing the direction and approximate strength of the enemy in terms of individuals or groups; and if the situation warrants, leading a friendly force to the exact location of a hostile force.

e) Recognizing these remarkable sensory abilities of a scout dog it is no wonder that in Feb 1963 four scout dogs attached to the 47th Inf Regt were able to locate an amazing total of two hundred and seventy-four (274) Montagnard tribesmen attempting to avoid capture in the mountainous regions of Kontum, VN. (Tactical Zone)

f) It is not our intent however to make you believe that scout dogs are infallible, incapable of error or devoid of limitations. They do have their limitations but they are harmful only when the handler is unaware of what they are and what influence they have on the dog's sensory and physical activities.

(2) Explaining the limitations of a scout dog:

a) Training and physical conditioning:

1. Unlike most people suppose a dog doesn't enter the threshold of military life with a so-called "nose" for working on human scent exclusively. This is something that the dog must be trained to do; like you would train a hound to hunt boar or deer.

2. The scout dog must also be trained to work on airborne scent alone. He must be broken from any attempt to track his human quarry. For a scout dog that is prone to track will lead you into an ambush everytime if the enemy is wise to his ways. Even a dog that only occasionally puts his nose to the ground will during this interval be subject to missing an alert.

3. He must also be discouraged from paying attention to animal scents. You cannot break a dog from alerting on animals but he should not be allowed to go in pursuit or pay more than momentary attention to these scents.

4. A scout dog must also be in top physical condition in order to withstand the rigors of traversing mountainous jungle terrain over extended periods of time and in tropical heat.

5. He must also be the subject of continuous training in the field as well as back in garrison. This should include regular scheduled hours of obedience, obstacles, road marches and scouting problems. The obstacles that he should be trained to overcome are those common to the terrain he will be encountering, ie; swinging bridges, monkey bridges, deep ravines, canals, rivers, etc.

b) Affects of wind, weather, terrain and environment:

1. Wind:

a. Wind is the most important single factor to be considered when employing scout dogs. For it is the wind that carries hostile scent and sounds to the dog. Denied the advantages of wind, no matter how slight, the effectiveness of a scout dog is greatly diminished.

b. In this regard a scout dog should be employed at the point or on the windward flank of a tactical element in order to take advantage of the wind.

c. The handler should be able to feel or sense what direction the wind is blowing at any time without having to rely on such expedients as dropping dust or a handful of hair from his dog's back and noting its direction of drift. A reliable indicator is the dog itself. Observe him and he will invariably tell you the direction of the wind since he will turn his nose into it.

d. Wind produces what is known as a scent cone. A real strong wind will produce a scent cone that is comparatively wider than a moderate steady wind due to the difference in wind velocity. A light wind, such as a breeze, due to its lack of force, will cause the scent to drift very weakly. Strong gusty winds on the other hand will create ever changing scent patterns depending on the wind's velocity at that particular moment.

Instructor note: Demonstrate effects of wind velocity on scent pattern by use of ~~pot~~ ~~and~~ small smoke pot. If this is not possible then illustrate on blackboard.

2. Terrain:

a. The effects of terrain on the travel of scent is also a variable factor, but one which also deserves the handler's consideration.

b. Wind hitting a hill top or the crest of a hill is prone to break into ^{two} or three smaller streams of air current. The effect is quite similar to that produced by water breaking around a boulder in the middle of a stream or river.

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c. A small table top or top of a mesa is probably the worst place for a dog to try to find a hidden man. Scents borne by the wind off a mesa may be scattered, blown aloft, or die before they come into contact with ground level. A dog may pick up a scent from a mesa only to lose it once he comes close because it is being blown over his head.

d. Mountains, gorges, buttes, breaks, valleys, and timberlines will all cause the wind to sweep and swirl. Thus, the only wind that will blow with any steadiness is that which comes over a flat and even surface.

e. Dense jungles will also restrict the travel of scent considerably, causing it to drift aimlessly due to the general lack of circulation in such areas. An alerting range of 15-30 meters is considered good under such conditions.

f. Human scents from foxholes become borne by the wind because scents rise as they evaporate. These scents are not as strong as those produced by men in the open.

3. Weather:

a. Weather plays an important part in the ability of the dog to work effectively.

b. Human scent dissipates more rapidly in a hot and dry climate than it does in an area where there is quite a bit of moisture. Heat from the sun causes scents to evaporate rather rapidly. During rains, scents remain close to their sources. Fog produces the same effect.

4. Environment:

a. Environment is another factor that will influence a scout dog's working ability to varying degrees.

b. Rice paddies will slow a dog's progress, which is many times to the handler's advantage, but it will in no way affect the dog's effectiveness. Their ability to scent and detect a hostile force is every bit as good as when working on firm ground.

c. A mountainous environment will tax a dog's stamina but if the dog is in good physical condition and his energies are conserved for those periods when he is actually needed then there is no reason why he shouldn't be able to keep pace with any human.

d. Working a scout dog in a village or hamlet, however, is conducive to the working abilities of the dog. A good example of this is where scout dogs have been used in support of Search and Seizure type of operation against the Viet Cong. In these instances the villagers were assembled at certain locations to minimize any distractions to the scout dogs while they searched houses for hidden enemy.

e. The most ideal of environment conditions for working a scout dog are found in those areas sparsely inhabited and with little or no outside distractions. It must be remembered that a scout dog is unable to distinguish between friend and foe and if through repeated contact with peasants, etc, he is constantly taken off the alert he will soon lose all interest.

c) List and describe other factors that influence a scout dog's effectiveness:

1. Vet support:

a. Vet support is essential to the continued effectiveness of dogs on a tactical operation.

b. In counter-insurgency operations there are many things that can happen to limit or render a dog ineffective. There is always the possibility of a dog drinking disease ridden water, stepping on a man-trap, heat exhaustion, etc. In most instances where a vet tech is present minor illnesses and injuries can be treated on the spot thus permitting the dog to continue its mission. If the opposite is true however, then there is usually no other alternative but to evacuate the dog to the rear to stave off infection or to prevent aggravating the illness.

2. Maintaining tactical proficiency:

a. Dogs in rear areas for refresher training must be kept in training and daily work of short duration is recommended.

b. A scout dog should not be used on both outposts and patrols in one night. If both an outpost and a patrol are needed, two dogs should be utilized. Experience has proven that a scout dog's most valuable function is that of patrolling.

c. Dogs which have not made contact during two successive patrols should be encouraged by patrolling against a staged ambush. This may be done on a very small scale, but sufficient to maintain the dog's interest in his mission.

d. A scout dog can work at maximum efficiency for two or three hours at a time; less in tropical climates. On long operations, demanding the use of a single dog at the point element for longer periods of time, two dogs should be used, keeping always one in the rear as a reserve element.

3. Food and nourishment:

a. A supply of fresh water carried on patrol is more vital than food.

b. If fresh water is not available then locally procured water should be either boiled or treated with purification tablets.

[REDACTED]

c. Just prior to going on patrol a scout dog should not be fed as this has the same effect as a man working right after eating a big meal. However, a plentiful supply of field rations should be taken by the handler, to feed the dog during operations.

d. And while a dog may be able to go a couple of days without food, he cannot do for long without water. This is particularly true here in Vietnam due to the heat and humidity which will cause a dog to dehydrate faster than in cooler climates.

5. Demonstration: (30)thirty minutes)

1. Explain the position of Scout Dogs with forward element, and reserve dogs with main body of patrol.

2. Explain the use of Scout Dogs in Sweeps(Search & Destroy Missions) and their position preceeding a skirmish line.

C. SUMMARY

(1) Restatement: Restate all main points covered during lesson.

(2) Appeal: Remotivate class by emphasizing the "need to know" aspects of the capabilities and limitations of scout dogs.

(3) Introduction: Introduce next class.