

HEADQUARTERS
III Marine Amphibious Force and Naval Component Command
Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
c/o FPO, San Francisco,
California 96601

G-3 Section
4 Jan 1966

AGENDA SUBJECT: War Dog Requirements

Ref: (a) CG FMFPAC MSG 121948Z Dec 1965

1. FACTS:

a. III MAF received the first complement of war dogs on 26 August when eleven sentry dogs and handlers arrived from Japan. The handlers had been selected from units of the 3d Division and sent to Japan for three weeks training with the dogs. After approximately three weeks additional training in-country, the sentry dogs were assigned to posts at ammunition supply points, LAAMS Battery sites, 2d ARVN Division Compound, and Marble Mountain Air Facility.

b. At present III MAF has no scout dogs assigned. Scout dogs with handlers are procured on a case-by-case basis from the ARVN.

c. III MAF is presently retraining four sentry dogs for use as scout dogs.

d. One scout dog platoon and one sentry dog platoon with handlers and supervision personnel have entered training in United States and are expected in-country approximately 20 March 1966.

e. An Air Force veterinarian is permanently stationed at Da Nang and is available to care for the Marine dogs.

f. III MAF/NCC has received many requests from subordinate units for the use of both sentry and scout dogs which cannot be filled by present assets.

g. At present III MAF has one lieutenant assigned to the dog platoon in a supervisory capacity. Two dogs are located at MAG-16, two at LAAMS B Battery on Monkey Mt.; three at 2d ARVN Div Hqs (Future MAF CP; one of the three is also used at irregular intervals at Camp TIENSHA and four are being retrained as scout dogs at the kennels.

2. DISCUSSION:

a. III MAF experience in the use of sentry dogs ranges from completely satisfactory to marginally unsatisfactory. Sentry dogs must be used in areas where few personnel are working or living for satisfactory performance.

Encl (10)

FROM III MAF COMMAND CHARACTER
JAN 1966

(6)

One of the best locations for III MAF use of sentry dogs has been at the Monkey Mountain LAAMS Battery site. The area is remote and very few personnel pass through area. As a result, the dogs provide excellent security. Conversely, an attempt was made to use sentry dogs around the ammunition supply point. Marine personnel are working in the area practically around the clock. This level of activity simply confused the dog. As a result, dogs had to be removed from this duty before they became completely ineffective.

b. III MAF has obtained scout dogs from ARVN on a case-by-case basis. Usually the dogs are obtained for about two to four days. Here again experience varies widely. However, it was the opinion of the unit employing the dogs that many of the problems evolve from the language barrier. In those cases where the handler could understand and speak some English, results were considerably better. It is believed that the effectiveness of scout dogs will increase considerably when III MAF is capable of providing scout dogs with Marine handlers.

c. III MAF is presently retraining four sentry dogs to scout dog duties. This has been instituted for two reasons: First, to obtain experience in handling scout dogs before arrival of the full scout dog platoon. Second, to determine the capability and length of retraining in the event an operational requirement necessitates retraining.

d. III MAF plans to house both incoming dog platoons in the Da Nang area. Both sentry and scout dogs will be furnished to the other enclaves on an as required basis. Dogs will be rotated back to the Da Nang kennels, probably at weekly intervals.

e. III MAF has been unable to determine the rationale behind the procedure of assigning two handlers per dog as indicated in reference (a). Experience gained in RVN indicates that the dog will tire and become ineffective long before the man. In addition, dogs are not kept on patrol more than four or five days at a time. They are then given a rest period of approximately same period. Considering the above, it is possible that III MAF may have a number of dog handlers available for assignment to other duties if all the handlers are deployed.

f. It is envisioned that the role of the sentry dog may become increasingly important as III MAF is able to fence adequately logistic areas, warehouses, and ammunition dumps. Once the areas are fenced and level of activity and movement reduced, sentry dogs should be able to provide excellent security against attempted infiltration or pilferage. The ability of the dog to cover much larger areas than an armed guard should significantly reduce manpower requirements.

g. As additional units are brought in country and as III MAF Forces adopt a more mobile role, it is envisioned that additional dog platoons will be required for the Chu Lai enclave and possibly the Hue Phu Bai en-

clave. Usage data at present is very sketchy. However, it is anticipated that a minimum of one scout dog platoon and one sentry dog platoon will be required for the Chu Lai enclave by July 1966.

h. Information has not been made available to MAF regarding the rank and number of supervisory personnel or equipment accompanying the dog platoons.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. That III MAF be informed whether two handlers per dog will be sent overseas.

b. That III MAF be informed of the number and rank of supervisory personnel that will accompany the two dog platoons.

c. That additional forces of one scout dog platoon and one sentry dog platoon be programmed for arrival in country approximately July 1966.

4. ACTION BEING TAKEN BY III MAF:

a. III MAF will continue to obtain as much information and experience as possible in the proper utilization of both scout and sentry dogs. This information to be disseminated in lessons learned.

b. III MAF is taking action to have a canine cantonment ready for the arrival of the two dog platoons in March.

5. ACTION BY HIGHER AUTHORITY:

a. Obtain the information required in paragraph 3.a. and b. and forward to III MAF.

b. Action be taken to procure the additional dog platoons enumerated in paragraph 3.c.