

1st Marine Corps Scout Dog Platoon
MILITARY POLICE COMPANY
HEADQUARTERS BATTALION
3d Marine Division, FMF

RW:jfp
31 May 1966

From: 1stLt. Robert V. Wilder, Platoon Commander, 1st Marine Corps Scout Dog Platoon
To: Commanding General, III MAF
Via: Commanding Officer, Military Police Company, Headquarters Battalion 3d Marine Division, FMF
Subj: Monthly Report of Activities for May 1966

1. During the month of May 1966 The First Marine Corps Scout Dog Platoon had thirteen commitments which involved deployment of Forty Scout Dogs. These dogs were used in the following capacities: Listening Posts, Search and Clear operations which involved chiefly finding tunnels and searching them, Night Ambush Patrols, Guarding VCS, and finding booby traps and gear such as ammo, clothes, weapons, food, and documents.

2. Results of these operations attributed to the Scout Dogs include the following: Four VCC

Approximately Thirty VCS
One .30 cal. rifle, Two .50 cal. emplacements
Six barrels of rice
Over 300 tunnels searched
One box 20mm ammo
One box .30 cal. ammo
Some shotgun shells
Three dead bodies
Several booby traps

Most of the VCC and VCS and equipment were found in tunnels which dog alerted on.

3. Some of the lessons learned in the month of May were:

a. That there are hardly any tunnels in a village itself. There are bomb shelters in all the villages but mostly all of the tunnels are found in hedgerows surrounding the villages. The covers to these tunnels are so well emplaced that a dog will alert on the air holes rather than the entrances.

b. That walking 2000 meters to an ambush site does not impair the efficiency of most Scout Dogs as an early warning device on a night ambush patrol but a distance greater than this does have a tendency to reduce his effectiveness.

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c. That a Scout Dog can not work at his peak efficiency for a period exceeding ten days. After ten days they get disinterested due to being in the same area for that length of time. Also due to the Sanatation standards which are unavoidable out in the field. Many dogs will just get runned down. The quality of food available is also a health hazzard for the dogs. (C-Rations and Prime)

d. Most booby traps are not rigged with trip wires but rather vines and natural vegetation. The dogs will alert on grenades but not on natural vegetation.

e. A Scout Dog is employed to his greatest capacity on night time operations. Many more night time operations could be conducted with the help of Soout Dogs.

f. Dog Handlers should be armed with a more self-protecting weapon than the .45 cal pistol.

4. During the month of May we have made progress in developing our camp site. Plans for the permanent kennels were finished and they should be laying the concrete by the end of the month. Electricity was established thanks to the generosity of the 9th Motor Transport Battalion. The 7th Engineer Battalion has built up the area west of us for the 1st MP Battalion, which should move in around the 1st of June 1966. The 7th Engineer Battalion has also established a site for a well wnich, they assured me, will be dug in a short time.

5. The permanent type kennels will make a much healthier environment for the dogs. Therefore their alertness and efficiency will be greatly increased along with their availability. Health problems that were encountered during this month include.

Three dogs had heartworms. They are presently being treated in Saigon. Many dogs have skin fungi and some even have fleas. Ninety percent of the skin-fungi and fleas will be eradicated when the dogs move into the permanent kennels. Flea powder must be made available. The Army Area Veterinarian is unable to obtain any. Rectal thermometers should be made available since this is the primary means of detecting heat exhaustion. Due to the unavoidable sanitary conditions and quality of food in the field (C-Rations & Prime) dogs should not be deployed for longer than ten days. Dogs must be exercised daily or their degree of acclimation will be reduced.

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