

Recognition – At Last!!



39th IPSD dog on “Special Operations”



For their services with a combined US Special Forces unit in March of 1967, the Special Operations Association in October 2002 honored Budda, 4A82, and his first handler Bob Brown, of the 39th IPSD. The association remembered Budda's actions “In Memoriam”, and Bob was made a life member during a formal presentation at their annual meeting in Las Vegas. According to the association, Budda is the only Military Working Dog ever to have served in this capacity.

The Special Operations Association (SOA) is a 1700+ member fraternal organization of American and foreign participants who have documented proof of having served in special military operations in combat theaters, primarily during the Southeast Asian conflict. The group also includes World War II and Korean Veterans as well as those from the more recent conflicts; membership is limited to members of Free World forces who aided or took part in missions deep inside hostile territory in a combat capacity. The association is mainly composed of US Army Special Forces personnel but also includes Air Commandos, Navy SEALs, Force Recon Marines and veterans of other elite military and civilian organizations, who were a part of Special Operations.

During the Vietnam War, U.S. political and military leaders confronted strategically important but elusive ground targets. Political and other considerations prevented the deployment of conventional ground units, and air power alone proved unable to eliminate the targets. In both cases, policymakers turned to special operations forces (SOF) to conduct reconnaissance operations to locate the hidden targets. During the Vietnam conflict, SOF teams crossed the border into Laos to search for critical targets along the Ho Chi Minh Trail that were obscured by triple-canopy jungle and camouflage. This network of footpaths, trails, and roads ultimately came to serve not only as a supply line for North Vietnamese forces but also as a basing area from which attacks could be staged on South Vietnam. U.S. forces confronted formidable obstacles in their efforts to stem the flow of traffic along the trail.

In early 1967, Budda and Bob of the 39th IPSD were selected for TDY assignment to the highly classified all-volunteer unit. Budda engaged in unconventional warfare and clandestine operations, roving deep into areas crawling with NVA soldiers, and lead six top-secret expeditions “over the fence” into Laos. Budda and Bob shared the knowledge of acts of remarkable valor that will never make the pages of history books. But nevertheless, the mission of a Scout Dog and his handler is to save and protect friendly forces. This they did, and did it well.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!