

43D INFANTRY PLATOON (SCOUT DOG)
9TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO San Francisco 96370

9 May 1969

SUBJECT: Evaluation of Off Leash Scout Dogs

Department of the Army
United States Army Vietnam
Dog Training Detachment
APO San Francisco 96375

1. This unit received two off leash scout dog handlers on 11 March 1969. Both handlers trained in the same class in the same training squad at Fort Benning so they will be discussed in unison since their histories are almost identical.

2. a.&b. SP4 Eric E. Cobb Jr. and Moose 702M, SP4 Billy L. Toft and Dusty 23M8

c. Class number (Fort Benning) 3

d. Arrived at unit - 12 March 1969

e. SP4 Cobb and Moose have been on eleven missions, seven sweeps and four ambushes. SP4 Toft and Dusty have been on nine missions, two sweeps and seven ambushes.

3. The following commentary is considered essential background before considering recommendations:

a. We learned from the handlers that they had been trained to work at a fast pace, that they were not trained on booby traps because they were told there were no booby traps in Vietnam, and that both dogs had been trained using a rubber hose for correction.

b. Neither dog received any training at Bien Hoa because of the VC attack on the Bien Hoa area. When we received the two teams, they had not had any practical training in almost two months. During their first workout in the training area we found that neither dog would respond to simple commands and that Moose was man shy and afraid of his own handler while Cobb held a rifle in his hands.

File 2-12

12 Jun 69 Fw

c. The result of our evaluation was that both dogs had to undergo extensive retraining starting with fundamentals such as getting the dog to work out in front of their handlers while on leash. They had to be trained on booby traps for the first time. It took one full month to make each team operational to the extent that we felt they were well enough trained on booby traps so as not to be unnecessarily risking their lives.

d. Since becoming operational both teams have had noteworthy successes. SP4 Cobb and Moose have alerted 3 times on enemy personnel, twice on ambushes. Moose also found one grenade booby trap in a dike. SP4 Toft and Dusty have alerted on personnel four times, three unconfirmed and one ambush. They have found four grenade booby traps. It is my opinion that these results are due to the high caliber of the dogs and the work of the handlers, not to any special training they received at Fort Benning. I consider the teams to have been successfully CJT'ed here on booby traps.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. No dog should be disciplined with a rubber hose and SSG Kinney who was the instructor in this case should be relieved of his duties as an instructor.

b. Off leash dogs, as with any scout dog, must be trained on booby traps if dog and handler are to survive in Vietnam.

c. There is no need for "off leash" dogs in the Delta, although there is a tremendous need for all dogs to be trained off leash for duty here. What I am saying is that the extra time, effort and money taken to train an off leash dog is unnecessary for our AO because the ideal situation for an "off-leash dog", the personnel alert with the dog at great distances from the handler, will never occur here. My best dogs and handlers are all capable of working with the dog off leash, 20 to 30 meters in front of the handler. This gives the handler a highly desirable safety factor in case the dog trips a booby trap. It is a product of time, patience, and hard work by handler and dog, but if the dog is not overly aggressive it can be obtained in under two months in country.

KARL K LUNGENHEIMER
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Commanding

File 27