

47th IPSD
Forever Forward

Mike

Much information on the 47th IPSD can be picked directly from our Web Site at www.47ipd.org
The Site contains a great deal of information but includes the following:

- 1) A Brief History of the unit going back to WW11
- 2) A Platoon Diary of the unit for the years 1968, 1969, 1970 and 1971
- 3) Many cool pictures that you are welcome to use.
- 4) A Documents Section that displays many original documents and letters to include many Monthly Reports of Scout Dog Operations.
- 5) A section for Newspaper clippings
- 6) Platoon Roster
- 7) Dog Roster
- 8) Organization Chart

The Honor role which is located on top of the Org Chart lists the handlers from the unit that were Killed in Service with the Unit.

We have many great pictures but a few I will particularly mention:

- 1) Aerial View of LZ Sally - First Base Camp for the 47th IPSD
- 2) Picture of the Back of the head of a German Shepherd from a Helicopter looking down on Camp Hocmuth near Phu Bai as the chopper prepares to land 1970.
- 3) The sign outside the barracks of the Scout Dog Training School Fort Benning GA 1968
- 4) Don Jestes & King 61A0 in a river while on patrol in 1968
- 5) 47th IPSD original Graduating Class Picture at Fort Robinson Nebraska August 18, 1945 with Commanche Hall in the back ground.
- 6) Several small group pictures & Graduating Class Parade
- 7) Many individual Pictures

SOME NOTABLE EVENTS

1968

>5/27/68 47th IPSD arrives at Tan Son Nhut Air Base Republic of Vietnam

>7/17/68 Platoon becomes Fully Operational

>7/17/68 Jimmy Powrzanas and his dog Pal find 400 Pounds of rice, two bunkers and alerted on a trip wire. Pal alerts again but field commander did not check it out. A few minutes later the supported unit got hit from the direction of the alert and suffered casualties but managed to kill several VC.

>7/19/68 Otis Johnson sustains shrapnel wound in leg when an infantryman sets off a booby trap.

>7/20/68 Frank Bagatta Sustains a shrapnel wound to the leg during a sweep out side 8-click village when a soldier he was working with set off a booby trap.

>7/26/68 Jonathan Harraden Walks into an ambush and sustains shrapnel wounds to his legs from a command detonated Chicom Claymore after his dog Major 3M47 (renamed Dawg by Jonathan) sends many alerts. The unit commanding officer, unfamiliar with working dogs units, insisted on pushing ahead to make contact. Others in the infantry unit were also wounded. Harraden was brought back to the medical unit at LZ Sally and then sent to the Army Hospital at Vung Tau and finally to Japan for treatment and rehabilitation. In December 1968 Harraden has recovered and rejoins the unit at LZ Sally as training NCO.

>7/27/68 James Youtz badly wounded in the arm on his first mission when a booby trap bomb explodes. His dog Willie 6M11 is killed.

>8/01/68 While on a night ambush supporting an element of the 101st Airborne Division, Edward Gunner Hicks with his dog Princess 1M20 hear movement in the bush in front of his NDP (night defensive position). Hicks responds correctly and opens fire in the direction of the sound. It turns out that the movement was from several American Soldiers from another unit who had mistakenly strayed into the wrong area. The American Soldiers were shot up pretty bad. Hicks is cleared of any wrong doing and was deemed to have acted appropriately. The incident is believed to have taken place in August 1968 but this detail still needs verification.

>8/10/68 Scout Dog Tramp is determined to be unworkable as a scout dog and is put down.

>8/25/68 Marvin R. Pearce becomes the first platoon member KIA from a shrapnel wound to the back of the head. Pearce and the unit he was supporting were just supporting out on patrol (traveling through an open area on a trail with knee-high grass on either side). Pearce was leading with one of the platoon sergeants acting as shotgun. Somewhere back in the middle of the patrol someone set off a booby trap. Standard operating procedure in a situation like that was to get off the trail and get down and take cover. Pearce turned to look and the sergeant with him dove off to the side of the trail. Unfortunately there was another booby trap that the sergeant hit. Pearce fell down and lay on his back. For a period of time the other members of the patrol could not understand what was wrong with Pearce - he looked fine. It turns out that a single piece of shrapnel had entered the back of his head. Pearce died from the injury. The saddest thing was that if Pearce had been wearing his steel helmet instead of a jungle hat he probably wouldn't have injured at all.

>9/15/68 Ernest Johnson sustains minor shrapnel wounds while on a mission

>11/03/68 Herman L. Allen (Rusty) and his dog Sig K036 has been captured on film by an AP photographer and his pictures appears back in the states in the Santa Barbara News Press edition dated November 3, 1968 above the caption that reads "This American trooper and his dog race along a beach for a break during an operation south-cast of Hue in Vietnam. The dog is one of about 1,100 German Shepherds serving with the U.S. forces. They have been used successfully now for three years as scouts and sentries"

>11/07/68 William Cunningham Sustains arm and chest wounds in a mortar attack at LZ Sharon when a round lands in the hooch next to his.

>11/24/68 Wesley Hermann with his dog Buck 61X2 causing Wesley to suffer a shattered Femur. Bullet Wound and nerve damage. Buck was killed in the ambush together with a soldier from New York who was trying to save Wes's life. Identity of the New York Soldier is not known.

> 12/68 Sgt. Gene Wright and his dog Pup 3M45 accounted for the largest enemy cache thus far which included 20,000 rounds AK-47. 75 Mortar rounds, three mortar tubes, 12 bolt rifles, and 1 thompson machine gun.

As 1968 closed the platoon had pulled 778 missions in support of the 2nd Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division. The 47th Scout Dog platoon was credited with 32 enemy KIA, two WIA and 64 POW's. With the arrival of the 1/5th Mechanized Infantry Division, the 47th IPSD supported operation Pioneer I in Quang Tri, Con Tien, Dong Ha and along the DMZ.

1969

>1/25/69 George Bowers gets a finger shot off from friendly fire while on platoon business outside the base perimeter at LZ Sharon.

>2/28/69 In February the platoon records a total of 174 days in the field and supports operation Nevada Eagle which concluded in February 1969. Nevada Eagle which was a reconnaissance in force operation

aimed at supporting government pacification and rice denial efforts in the central Thua Thien Province. Casualties were: US 175 KIA, 1,161 WIA; Enemy 3,299 KIA and 853 POW's.

>3/21/69 Leroy Jackson and his Scout Dog Bizz 16M6 were pulling a mission in the Ashaw Valley. For several days prior, the unit he was supporting had major contact with VC forces. Leroy and Bizz stopped to rest before heading up a hill that was known to have enemy forces in recent days. As they rested, Leroy heard a round being chambered but knew it was not from his unit. At that time Leroy let his dog Bizz run loose to locate the enemy. As the dog ran up the hill he located the enemy who then opened fire and killed Bizz. Bizz is credited with saving lives by springing the ambush before American lives were taken.

>03/69 Rusty Allen escorts Gary Detrick, Clinton Epps and Sam Bowers into the Ashau Valley for their first ever combat missions. Rusty walks slack for Detrick. The Scout Dog Teams get into a firefight with a dug-in regiment of NVA troops that keep them pinned down for four hours.

>3/69 Thirty years later (4/14/99) Jeff Cahen SP/4, A Company 1/501 Infantry 101st Airborne Division recounts a story while walking 2nd man behind the Scout Dog handler (believed to be Richard Hong) and his dog Ebony 030M as follows: "They were walking point with me close behind in the Ashau valley circa Spring 1969 when the dog froze in her tracks refusing to go any further. To this day I still believe she stopped us from walking into an ambush. I will never forget Ebony's beauty, friendliness and intelligence. She wasn't a big German Shepherd, probably 90 lbs and completely black. She was one magnificent animal".

>4/13/69 Gary Gene Detrick was KIA in Thua Thien Province from hostile ground fire and other explosive device - possibly a command-detonated mine. His dog Princess 1M20 (formerly Edward Gunner Hick's dog) was also killed. George Bowers was on an adjacent hillside supporting another unit and witnessed the explosion. Ronnie McCrary had just traded dogs and missions with Detrick and Gary went on Ronnie's Mission while Ronnie waited to go on the next one.

>Sergeant Larry Proper receives the Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device for heroism in ground combat against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam on March 21, 1969 in support of the 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry, 101st Airborne Division. Larry put his own life at risk in dragging other infantry troops to safety while under hostile fire.

>6/11/69 The Army Times edition dated June 11, 1969 tells the story of a 47th Scout Dog by the name of Sarge X052 who goes AWOL. Sarge X052 and SP4 Ronnie McCrary were working with Alpha Co. 1st Bn. 502d Infantry near Fire Base Veghel, as Ronnie recalled as follows:

"We were on a small hill when Sarge X052 alerted to something in the stream at the bottom of the slope. I didn't have a leash on him and he took off down to the stream." When McCrary reached the bottom of the hill Sarge was gone. I called and called but he did not come back. It was like he'd vanished"

McCrary stayed with A Company and came back into Fire Base Birmingham with the unit two days later. From there he went back to LIZ Sally. We figured Sarge was gone for good. Three days after being lost, Sarge reappeared outside the gate of Fire Base Bastogne barking his head off. They let him in where he was turned over to the 58th Scout Dog Platoon who returned him to the 47th Scout Dog Platoon where he belonged.

>7/01/69 George S. Bowers and Ronald J. Bullock were WIA

>8/31/69 Phillip E. Roush and his Scout Dog Shep 69A3 were working with B Company 2/502 when Shep alerted on a bunker complex which yielded a large cache of weapons, rounds and materials.

>9/69 William L. Huskie carries his Scout Dog Little Joe 223M who has been hit by small arms fire for eight hours until they can get to a place where they can get a Medical Evacuation helicopter to take the dog for treatment. A newspaper article of an unknown publisher and date (estimated to be approximately September 1968) recounts the story as follows:

While supporting the 1st Bn, 502nd Airborne Infantry William L. Huskie and his Scout Dog Little Joe 223M come under sniper fire. Little Joe is hit by two rounds in the side that would have hit Huskie if Little Joe had not acted as a shield. The incident happened at 9AM in the morning but due to the thick jungle a Medivac could not be accomplished. Huskie carries Little Joe until 5:00PM that evening when they are evacuated for medical aid. Little Joe recovers and his handler comments as follows: "There is no doubt in my mind that Little Joe 223M saved my life today plus a hundred other times by sniffing out the enemy before they spotted us." Huskie said "If I could, I'd take him home with me and treat him like a King. Joe deserves it"

>9/69 Arthur Lamar was wounded by 60mm mortar fragments while in an NDP (night defensive position). Lamar was sent to the 95th Evac at Da Nang.

>10/15/69 Handler James Adams supporting A Company 1st Bn (Ambl) 501st Infantry was working his dog Fritz 4M69 off leash on a trail when Fritz suddenly stopped. Adams calls the alert and signals for his infantry patrol to get down. At that time Fritz took one more step when a command-detonated claymore mine or trip wire device exploded. Fritz was killed but it is estimated that he saved from 4 to 6 American lives.

1970

>1/08/70 Scout Dog Murphy 6M77 was working off-Leash when a member of the point element saw movement in the bush and opened fire. Both of Murphy's testicles were shot off. Murphy recovers and returns to the unit on January 25th 1970.

>2/70 Approximately February 1970 the 47th Scout Dog Platoon relocates its base camp from from LZ Sally to Camp Hocmuth near Phu Bai when LZ Sally is turned over to the ARVN troops under Vietnamization of the war. The new platoon site is located in the old Cobra Pilot's area.

>2/22/70 Scout Dog Little Joe 223M is KIA from small arms fire as he saved the lives of a squad of U.S. soldiers south of FSB Spear Vietnam. Working with his handler Sgt. Charles Franks of Huntsville, Alabama, Little Joe was walking the point position for the third Platoon of Company D, 1st Bn, 501st Infantry when he gave a strong alert. The 101st soldiers hit the ground just before a squad-sized NVA element opened up on them with small arms and automatic weapons fire from a bunker nearby. Official records indicate that Little Joe's body was not recovered. Only a few weeks before, Little Joe 223M had been credited with saving the lives of three other men by alerting them to an NVA ambush.

>03/07/70 Handlers Charles Franks and Lane Jacobson are recommended for the Bronze Star with "V" Devise for their actions in the field.

>3/15/70 Benjamin Wilson was WIA as the result of an enemy ambush and evacuated to Japan. Wilson's Dog Prince 14M1 was not injured. Source document: March 1970 Monthly Report of Scout Dog Operations dated 4/01/70.

>3/30/70 Handler Robert Surratt was WIA as the result of an enemy attack on his units NDP. Surratt's dog Rex 9A20 was injured and was sent to the 175th Veterinary Detachment in Phu Bai. It is determined that Rex has permanent ear damage. Source document: March 1970 Monthly Report of Scout Dog Operations dated 4/01/70

>4/26/70 While attached to C Company 3/187th handler Lane H. Jacobson's dog Smokie 7M50 was KIA as a result of friendly fire. The squad that Lane was with was in a night ambush position approximately 300 meters from the 3rd platoon when members of the 3rd platoon heard movement from the squad ambush and opened fire on the squad. The only casualty was Smokie 7M50. *(Footnote: Military and VDHA Records show Smokie spelled "Smokey" and indicate this incident occurred on 4/26/70. This incident however is reported in the Monthly Report of Scout Dog Operations dated 3 May 1970 which covered the month of April 1970 but gives the date of the incident as being 3/26/70.*

>5/70 Scout dog Sarge X052 dies as the result of heat exhaustion.

>5/17/70 Handler Darrold Smith is WIA as a result of a booby trap which was detonated by his cover man. Smith's dog Lance 8M79 received no injuries. Smith was evacuated to the USS Sanctuary for medical treatment.

>6/09/70 Theodore Gibbs and his dog Charger 416A were in a NDP with the 1st platoon of C Company 2/327 when the position came under mortar fire. Charger became frightened and broke leash and was KIA after running into a mechanical ambush.

>7/70 Approximately July 1970 a very unusual and extra ordinary mission occurred that involved two Scout Dog Teams from the 47th IPSD. The mission was comprised of Joseph White and his Scout Dog Ebony 030M and Teddy Gibbs and his Scout Dog Dug 112M. Gibbs is reported to have also worked Scout Dog Charger 416A at other times. These two dog teams together with another team were sent to a mountainous jungle area West of Phu Bai to support the 2/327 Infantry. An altercation erupted between the handlers and the commanding officer of the unit over several issues one of which was a dog fight that broke out between two of the dogs. The commanding Officer of the unit (whose identity is not known) is alleged to have pointed his rifle at Gibbs causing Joe white to knock the commander to the ground - and a scuffle ensued. This incident and other issues caused the sentiments between the handlers and the unit to turn ugly and suspicious. The following morning the tensions had not been diffused and White and Gibbs refused to continue the mission with the unit as they feared for their safety and support from this unit. Instead, Joe White and Teddy Gibbs, decided to make their way back to Phu Bai by following the ridge line back down one mountain and over another mountain to the low lands where they linked up with other Americans who helped them get back to their platoon area at Phu Bai. White and Gibbs were eventually Court Marshaled for disobeying a direct order and penalized by loss of rank and two months pay. Their trek back was made all the more fascinating when they ran out of water and Ebony alerted on water which may have saved their lives.

>9/09/70 Handler Tim Edwin Newell was KIA and his dog Blackie #38A3 ran off. Blackie was heard barking and howling that night but was never recovered.

>9/70 Scout Dog Baron #81A3 was Killed.

>10/70 Handler Alwyn R. Darmstat and his Mine Dog Rider 7K21 were working the rail road tracks. Rider alerted on a large mine placed under the tracks saving the team and the train that might have come along.

Sandy Burnstein who accompanied Darmstat on the mission recounts the events as follows:

"The location was the Lang-co bridge, the largest bridge in I Corp as I remember. I was walking second man behind Darmstat trying to keep the ARVN troops relatively close for support. It was very scary as on one side of the tracks there was a ridge about 100 feet tall and on the opposite side was the sea, meaning if we were ambushed, the only place to run was into the sea. There was tall wet monkey grass between the tracks. All of us were walking between the tracks. It was thick so we couldn't see much through the grass. Rider stopped and sat (a mine dog's alert). We peeked through the grass and there it was. We called in a demolition's team and they pulled out a 30 pound block of c4 obviously enough to blow the next train. Rider saved me and Darmstat from certain death as I was about 20 feet behind Rider and Darmstat."

>10/70 Charles Casimano and his dog Roger 3M84 were patrolling in the mountains outside of Phu Bai when Roger alerted on a booby trap ahead. By the type of alert that Roger gave, Casimano was sure it was a trip wire devise. The booby trap turned out to be a US dropped bomb which had not detonated. The enemy had found it and ran a trip wire to the bomb. Casimano and Roger were awarded the Bronze Star for preventing serious injury or death to the men in the unit.

>10/22/70 John Pinezaddleby and his Scout Dog Fant KO27 were on a mission with the 3rd Platoon, A Company 2/327th. The unit was in an NDP (night defensive position) when Fant broke away from his handler and was shot by friendly troops who assumed the dog was the enemy. Fant's body may not have been recovered.

>11/30/70 Sergeant First Class Rafael Angel Diaz was killed at approximately 0430 hours by an M-18-A1 Anti-Personnel (Claymore) Mine placed on the sandbag wall next to his bunk. Diaz was asleep at the east end of billets #11-337 at the time of the detonation. The explosion caused a 5' by 5' hole in the end of the billets and knocked Diaz from his bunk. Diaz was evacuated to the 85th Evac Hospital where he was pronounced dead at 0530 hours. An Army investigation was conducted and concluded it was an intentional homicide but there was insufficient evidence to prosecute anyone for the crime.

>12/28/70 Kenneth Nywening's Dog Sergeant 5A05 becomes ill while on a mission supporting the 1st/501st Infantry. The team is brought in from the field and the dog died that same day.

>12/70 In December 1970 while working with the combined forces of Americans and ARVN's, Alwyn Darmstat's Mine Dog Rider 7K21 finds three large booby traps with no casualties. Exact date of incident is not known.

1971

>1/30/71 Scout Dog Prince 74X1 Killed

>2/11/71 The Army Commendation Medal "For Exceptionally Meritorious Achievement" is awarded to handlers Richard T. Murray, John Pinezaddleby, Jon C. Wilde, Paul Michael Miller and Kenneth Nywening.

>3/15/71 While supporting Company D, 1st Bn (AMBL) 502nd Infantry Spec 4 Edward Reeves with his Scout Dog Prince 986A and James P. Kuezek with his Scout Dog Fat Albert 7K10 discover an incredible 12 enemy booby traps which prevented possible death or injury to a platoon of infantrymen. Reeves and Prince 986A discovered eight booby traps and Kuezek and Fat Albert 7K10 replacing the Reeves team discover another four earning them the Bronze Star with "V" device. Fat Albert literally blocked Kuezek from advancing into the danger area. The 4 booby traps were rigged to go off simultaneously. This incident is documented in the March 15, 1971 issue of the Screaming Eagle.

>3/71 While on a mission, Frank Steinhebel's Scout Dog Bullet 6M29 falls down a water fall and is unable to pull any further missions. Frank relates that Bullet also had a bad case of Red Tongue and that he bit quite a few people but that he did his job.

>5/71 Steve Lemish with his dog Duke 96M0 were on a Red Dot mission when Duke stepped into a hole on the trail and was injured. Duke and Steve were medivac'd via jungle penetrator to Phu Bai where Duke was attended to in the MASH Unit. They were then flown to Danang to catch an Air Force C-130 to Cam Rahn Bay where Duke spent 5 plus hours in surgery. Duke recovered fully after a period of physical therapy.

*Red Dot mission defined by Steve Lemish: "The last part of April 1971 or the first week in May, a map was found (we heard it was on a dead enemy soldier). It was determined that the map represented an area near Hue out in the jungle. The map had red dots on it and the first two grunt missions sent to the "Red Dot" areas found very large enemy caches. Steve remembered one was an underground hospital. They also found all the trails leading to the "Red Dots" were heavily booby trapped, so they decided to take a Scout Dog to each of the remaining "Red Dot" Areas. There were approximately 7 "Red Dot" areas total. To Steve's recollection all of the Dog Teams came from the 47th IPSD. It was remembered that several of the dogs who went out on these missions were injured but we do not have facts to substantiate.

>6/01/71 Scout Dog Dug 112M was killed in action. Dug 112M and an unknown handler were sent out to walk the first leg of a mission. Dug had not gone more than about 300 meters when Dug was killed (First hand account by Frank Steven's).

>6/28/71 Scout Dog King 72M4 was killed near Firebase Tomahawk. Frank Steven's with his Scout Dog King 72M4 were on patrol ahead of a unit of about 90 men who were following a map that had been found on an enemy officer. Twice King stopped and laid down on the trail in front of his handler and growled. Twice Steven's praised his dog until King got up and moved forward. The third time King left

but did not return. The soldiers were ready to go down a hill when Steven's heard rustling off to the side. Steven's followed the noise and found King pulling a North Vietnamese soldier out of a ditch. He had the man by the neck and was shaking him. Steven's started firing at the other men in the ditch and at that point "the whole world blew up" as Steven's remembers. Machine Gun fire ripped through the jungle killing King and wounding Steven's and his slack man. Steven's reported that his dog "in his act of bravery (he) saved my life and the lives of countless others..."

>7/71 In anticipation of the platoon stand down, the dogs are prepared for shipment and sent down south to Bien Hoa to an uncertain fate. The two platoon mascots (Flexible and Sally-J) were sent to the 2nd Brigade Headquarters Company where they became mascots to that unit. Their ultimate fate is unknown at this time.

>7/21/71 The 47th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) officially stands down ending the platoon's service in Vietnam.

Postscript

Platoon Sergeant James Michael Selix (former platoon member of the 47th IPSD) was killed on October 30, 1971 in Binh Duong, South Vietnam. Reason given was Hostile, Ground Casualty - Misadventure.