

UNIT HISTORY

58th INFANTRY PLATOON (SCOUT DOG)
3rd BDE. 101st AIRBORNE DIV. (AMEL)
APO San Francisco 96383

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
58th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog)
APO San Francisco 96383

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SUBJECT: Unit History

January 1970 marked the end of 1LT Eugene Ambersons tour as commander of the 58th Inf Plt (Sct Dog). He relinquished command to 1LT Timothy E. Bryan. Significant activities during January were slight. The 58th Inf Plt (Sct Dog) continued to support 3rd Brigade, 101st Abn Div (Ambl) in operation "Randolf Glen."

The month of February 1970 was significant in that it marked the second anniversary of our deployment to Vietnam. The months of February and March 1970 were slow in the use of scout dogs. This was primarily due to adverse weather conditions which prevented using Scout Dogs to the best of their abilities. 31 March 1970 brought an end to operation "Randolf Glen."

On the first of April 1970, we began operation "Texas Star." With good weather returning to our region we saw an increase in the use of scout dogs. During April, the 58th Inf Plt (Sct Dog) accounted for two prisoners of war, four enemy killed, three AK-47's captured, and warning of two enemy ambushes. The month of April 1970, ended with 111 support days.

The month of May 1970 was very slow. The 58th Inf Plt (Sct Dog) had only one support day for the month. This was due in part to adverse weather conditions and rugged terrain. Another factor was a training stand down by a unit which normally uses a large number of scout dog teams.

On the 21st of June 1970, 2nd LT Francis H. Hills assumed command of the 58th Inf Plt (Sct Dog) from 1LT Timothy E. Bryan.

1LT Bryan, after a six month tour as the commander of the 58th Inf Plt (Sct Dog) left for the USARV Dog Training Detachment in Saigon. His new job is training officer in charge of the Scout Dog Training Program. June's activities increased to the point where we had 140 support days for that month. The increase was due largely to renewed enemy activity in the 3rd Brigade area of operation.

Activity for the month of July 1970 started off with an increase in calls for scout dog teams. However, by the months end the calls for scout dog teams tapered off. This month turned into a tragic one in that we lost two men. SP4 William Ray was killed by an enemy boby trap while working his dog in the mountains South West of Camp Evans. His dog, Fritz, received minor shrapnel wounds. SP4 Bruce Bond was wounded two days after SP4 Ray was killed. SP4 Bond was Medevaced back to the United States. Before the heavy shelling and eventual pullout from Fire Base Ripcord, our dog teams were used considerably in the area around the firebase. The month of July ended with a total of 81 support days.

The calls for dog teams during the month of August 1970 remained steady. Towards the end of the month, it was difficult to keep up with the request for dog teams. At one point we were supporting five battalions (2/506, 3/187, 2/502, 1/506, 2/501). The 58th Inf Plt (Sct Dog) suffered one WIA, SGT Monty and his dog Rex. They both received minor shrapnel wounds while on patrol with C CO, 2/501.

SP4 Harry Villano, a mine dog handler, lost his dog "Palo" while on a road clearing operation. They were working with C CO, 14th Eng on a road clearing operation. when "Palo " bolted and made a dash for the wood line. Efforts were made to recover the dog but to no avail. The month of August 1970 ended with 151 Support days.

The month of September 1970 brought an end to operation Texas Star and began operation Jefferson Glen. We started out the month with a continuous call for dog teams. At one point, the dog and dog handlers were getting a 24 hour break before returning back to the field for a mission. The calls for dog teams suddenly stopped and during the last week and a half of the month, there were no calls for dog teams. The month of September 1970 ended with 111 Support Days.

During the first half of the month of October 1970, the 58th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) sent no teams to the field. There was no apparent reason for the non use of dogs. However, there did appear to be a slow down in the 3rd Brigade's tactical operations. The calls for dog teams during the last two weeks of October were at a relatively fast pace. On October 31, 1970, PFC Benjamin Rivera lost his dog "Hiedi" due to a booby trap. PFC Rivera was unharmed by the explosion. October 1970 ended with 80 support days. During the last week in October, the 58th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) received a new Platoon Sergeant, SFC John P. Benson. SFC Howard W. Rayno, who spent a year as platoon sergeant, left as a result of normal DEROS. SFC John P. Benson had previously been with the 40th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) in 1968.

November 1970, was an active month for the 58th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) We had a continuous call for dog teams through out the month. The month ended with 173 support days. Do to the bad weather conditions caused by the Monsoons, the effectiveness of the dog teams were lessened considerably. Many times the dog teams were not used at all during a five day mission in the field.

PFC Arthur Christian and his dog Tramp undoubtedly saved the 3rd Platoon of A Company 3/187th from walking into an ambush. The dogs actions did not go unheard. The 58th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) received a call from the Company Commander of the Unit as well as from the Battalion Commander of the 3/187th praising the dog and dog handler.

The month of December 1970 was again a busy one. There was limited contact in the 3rd Brigade's area of operation, but this did not slow up the use of scout dogs. During the last week of December 1970, The 58th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) had a well deserved stand down. The dogs as well as the men were deserving of a rest. Even with a week off, the 58th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) closed out the month with 183 support days.

In reviewing the year, the 58th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) worked a total of 1059 support days for 1970. We finished out the year supporting operation "Jefferson Glen."