

57th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog)

In Vietnam, each infantry brigade is authorized a scout dog platoon, and for the 198th Infantry Brigade, the 57th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) fills the bill. Since joining the Brigade in 1968, the 57th Scout Dog Platoon has built a tradition of service surpassed by none.

The primary mission of the platoon is to provide early silent warning for infantrymen in the field. The scout dogs, who along with his handler, composes a team, are able to alert on personnel, mines, booby traps, and trip wires. The teams have been so successful in their support role that the infantry companies of the Brigade utilize this support platoon to its full potential.

The lives of countless infantrymen have been saved by the alert dogs and handlers who have warned of imminent enemy attacks, uncovered numerous mines and booby traps, and in many cases have taken a lot of pressure off of hundreds of pointmen.

In November, 1970, a scout dog named "Kaizer" gave a strong alert to his handler, Private First Class Gaylon E. Udy. PFC Udy notified the company commander of Charlie Company, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, with whom the team was working. A squad was sent out, and the "Professionals" captured seven Viet Cong soldiers. This is just one of the many instances where the scout dogs have proved their worth in military operations with the Brigade.

The scout dogs and their handlers are trained in a 12-week course at Ft. Benning, Ga. Another three-week training course is taken at the Bien Hoa Training Detachment before the team arrives at Brigade. This training is supplemented with weekly training exercises for the dog and handler given by the platoon itself in Chu Lai. This refresher training keeps the teams at peak effectiveness.

Companies of the Brigade have learned to rely heavily on this type of support, and have increasingly used the 57th Scout Dog Platoon to its full potential.