

anymore, so he was relieved of duty, awaiting Euthanasia. Of course, everyone felt sorry for him and befriended him, so he quickly became a mascot and friend to all.

The new Colonel saw Baron on one of his first inspection tours, learned of his scheduled Euthanasia and decided that wasn't going to happen. With some instruction and help from Sergeant Varney, Baron became the Colonel's dog. We now had a new dog handler. Of course, he didn't pull any post duty, but he would come up to the kennels, load Baron up in his Jeep, and go tour the base and perimeter every day or so. You'd think that old black dog had died and gone to heaven to see him riding around in that Jeep with the Colonel, and the Colonel looked pretty pleased with himself, also. One good thing about it, from that point on, just about anything the K-9 section needed, we received.

Losing a dog was always a devastating experience for the handler concerned, but it also had an effect on the entire unit. All the other handlers knew it could have been them, or it may be their turn next. To lose a dog under combat conditions was very tough, but to lose one because of a stupid accident was almost too much to bear.

A good example of this happened to an Airman Second Class in my squad. If I hadn't seen the accident, I would have been inclined to blame the handler for negligence, but I was sitting there within a few feet and watched the entire tragedy as it unfolded. The Regulations stated that 'Dogs will be lifted onto

and off of trucks. They will not be allowed to jump". This regulation was followed loosely or religiously depending upon the handler.

Airman Second Walker and I were the last two teams on the back of the truck that night. As we pulled up to the post drop off that was assigned to Walker, he threw his gear off, moved to the tail gate which was extended straight out, told his dog to sit and stay, then jumped off the truck. Instead of obeying, the dog decided to jump off also. When he did, his left front paw slipped into the crack between the tailgate and truck bed. The result was the breaking of all the bones in his foot. When it came out of the crack, and as he hit the ground, the damage was compounded. I immediately got on the radio and had backup teams dispatched, and to have the veterinarian meet us at the kennels. I sent Walker and his dog in with our driver and covered both posts until relief arrived. Returning to the kennels, I checked with Captain Caraway, our veterinarian. The diagnosis was as I've already described. The prognosis, not good. He would set and cast the leg, but didn't have much faith in a favorable outcome. After six to eight weeks, it became obvious that the break was not going to heal. This meant the dog was unfit for military duty and was going to have to be put down. Airman Walker took this news very, very hard. Like I said, the loss of a close companion due to a stupid accident is almost unbearable.

*Photo 1.39

Somebody, probably our new Colonel, came up with the idea



Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam

Doc Caraway prepares to remove the cast. They discover the foot has not healed at all, and the dog will have to be put down.