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OSD/ARPA

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Doop,

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief of Staff

SUBJECT: Utilization of War Dogs

NW 24720  
By SAF: H Date 2004

1. Purpose.

The purpose of this memorandum is to correct some popular misconceptions concerning the utilization of war dogs and to recommend a decisive course of action.

2. Background.

During recent conversations with staff members and field advisors, it is apparent that the value of war dogs is highly under-rated, their full potential subjectively minimized, and their distinct assets ignored. Since all of the factors that may have been used to form these erroneous opinions are not known, certain proven facts may serve to clarify the situation from an R&D viewpoint.

3. Discussion.

The ultimate combat usefulness of war dogs depends equally upon the specific breed, their specialized use and the qualitative and quantitative training given each dog and handler. Listed below in the relative order of importance are a few of the more common roles in which dogs may be employed to the distinct advantage of the RVNAF:

a. Sentry Duty.

Dog is trained to operate on a leash either inside a closed area or outside on the perimeter of an installation, alerting the handler without sound when the presence of an intruder is detected. At the discretion of the handler, the dog may be unleashed for attack. It is believed that sentry dogs provide the greatest potential in Viet Nam since experience (US, UK, etc.) has proven that one dog and handler can effectively replace from 10 to 16 sentries. This, of course, depends upon the installation and the back-up of a quick reaction force.

b. Compound Duty.

Dog is trained to operate without leash inside a compound or a building, and to attack without sound any intruder except its handler. This type dog is particularly vicious and should be of a breed adaptable for this purpose, since its potential is best utilized in fixed installations.

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c. Patrol Duty.

The dogs under test training by the CDTC perform patrol type duty on a leash with the handler, normally several meters ahead of a combat patrol. The dog is trained to alert the handler of the direction and distance of any person(s) in the immediate vicinity. Under certain conditions the dog could be released to attack, thereby alerting the patrol to the exact location of the enemy, and in some instances, the relative size of the enemy force.

Although patrol dogs are normally trained for use in an attack role, they should not be used in this manner except under the most pressing circumstances. This is necessary because (1) the dog cannot distinguish between friend and foe, and (2) the casualty rate among dogs would be exorbitant.

ARVN personnel have indicated that they also have a requirement for patrol dogs to operate, without leash, up to 200 meters in front of patrols. The dogs would be trained not to bark, and to return to their handlers and thus alert the patrols. Dogs can be easily trained for this task provided that they are not also trained for attack duty.

d. Tracking Duty.

U.S. experience indicates that male German Shepherd dogs are better utilized for sentry and patrol duties than for tracking purposes.

Since tracking is normally divided into two categories, e.g., "hot tracking" with the scent no more than two hours old, and "cold trailing" with the scent from 2 to 48 hours old, a different breed of dog is required for these duties.

German Shepherds have been used successfully on occasions in the hot tracking role. However, other breeds are better suited from a physiological viewpoint.

A particular breed of hound dogs have been used to the best advantage for "cold trailing" and are recommended in the event a valid requirement is stated and approved.

The use of German Shepherds trained for sentry or patrol duty is not recommended for tracking purposes, since the principle of scouting and patrolling requires the dog to keep his head up and be alert for live scents.

Recently, the two German Shepherds previously trained under Task No. 19 were used successfully in this role by the Capital Military District to which they are assigned for test purposes. In this instance the dogs were used to search all homes in a village suspected of harboring Viet Cong. All buildings were evacuated and the dogs were brought in to search the huts. Although several suspects were found, the dogs were

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operating at a disadvantage, since the particular building still contained fresh scents from the evacuated inhabitants. Under similar circumstances it would have been better to have waited at least two hours so that the dogs would not have been distracted by false scents.

e. Special Purpose Duty.

Dogs - and their handlers - may be trained and used for any number of special tasks:

(1) Locating underground caches of munitions, supplies, non-metallic and metallic mines by the "attraction" method.

(2) Locating illegal goods and opium caches.

(3) Recovery, during combat, of small arms.

(4) Civil or military police riot control; constable type patrolling in "hot" districts; and specialized attack purposes.

f. Psychopathic Killers.

Dogs, like humans, tend to become psychopathic killers under certain conditions of intensified training and continued use. It is suggested that rather than dispose of these animals locally, that they be introduced into certain denied areas or trails for psychological effect.

2. Although the foregoing is general in nature, certain distinct military advantages will accrue from the immediate use of dogs by the RVNAF. Experts attached to the Research and Development Division are available to provide additional information or specific details as required.

3. It is <sup>the</sup> considered opinion of this Division that sentry and patrol dogs should be introduced into the RVNAF at the earliest practicable date. In addition it is strongly recommended that:

a. The proposed MAP supported Dog Company be activated without further delay under the emergency assistance provisions cited recently by State-Defense and OSD. In this connection the R&D Division has already taken immediate action to obtain, through OSD/ARPA resources, an initial cadre of 60 dogs.

b. The Dog Company be organized and staffed as a Replacement Training Center to which selected individuals from the combat elements may be sent for training. This system produces better results, since if the individual and dog is organic to the unit the soldier will be of a higher caliber than that normally furnished another unit (the universal military practice of dumping "8-balls").

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c. Dog handlers be selected from trained combat personnel particularly adept at scouting and patrolling. Handlers should be volunteers, since an essential prerequisite is an interest in dogs and their potential use. Individuals thus selected should be placed on TDY with the Dog Center for the full training period of 6 weeks. It must be emphasized that dog handlers should, in addition to a genuine liking for dogs, possess sufficient intelligence to grasp the many facets of the training program.

This point can be sharply proven by observation of the 8 dog handlers recently assigned to work with the 6 U.S. and 2 VN dogs in the R&D program. With but few exceptions the dogs appear to be more intelligent than the recently recalled reservists assigned this duty.

d. Immediate action be taken to increase the emergency MAP program for procurement of dogs so that within one year there would be 500-1000 trained dogs and handlers operating in the field.

e. Provisions be made for a dog replacement program so that an 500-1000 level can be maintained. Included should be resupply of dry dog food, equipment, veterinarian supplies.

f. Plans include refresher rotational training of dogs and handlers on a 6 months periodic basis by the Replacement Training Center (War Dog).

g. MAAG request that an experienced U.S. dog handler instructor be assigned immediately to MAAG, Viet Nam, for duty with the Center.

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