

THE UNITED STATES WAR DOGS ASSOCIATION

CANINES WITH COURAGE



HONORING OUR NATION'S WAR DOGS AND THEIR HANDLERS

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- Military Working Dogs have been used by the U.S. Military since World War I. American families donated their dogs to the military to aid our troops during wartime. Dogs, along with their volunteer handlers, trained in teams as scouts, trackers, sentry, mine/booby-trap/tunnel and water detection of hostile forces. Dogs were used in WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. It has been estimated that these courageous canine heroes saved over 10,000 lives during the conflict in Vietnam. Today all branches of our Armed Forces are utilizing Military Patrol Dogs specializing in Drug and Bomb/Explosive detection. There are approximately 600-700 of these canines in the Middle East in such places as Kuwait, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. They are being used to patrol Air Bases, Military Compounds, Ammunition Depots and Military Check Points. They are guarding and protecting our Military Personnel as they were trained to do, with Courage, Loyalty and Honor.*

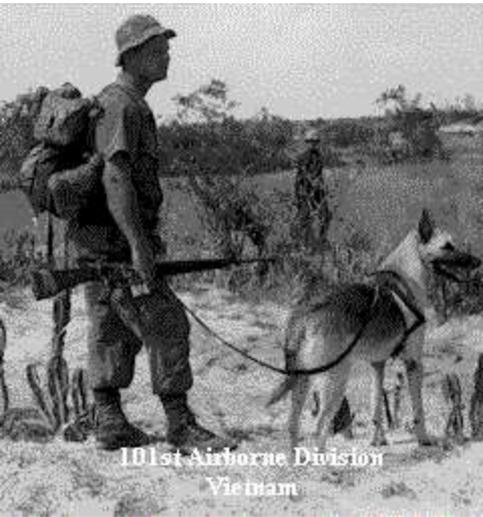


Breeds

- At first more than thirty breeds were accepted. Later the list was narrowed down to German Shepherds, Belgian Sheep Dogs, Doberman Pinschers, Farm Collies (short hair) and Giant Schnauzers. In all, a little over 19,000 dogs were procured between 1942 and 1945 (about 45% of these were rejected as unsuited for training).



German Shepherd



Doberman Pinscher



Belgian Sheepdogs



Farm collies short hair



Giant Schnauzers





TRAINING

- **The first War Dog Reception and Training Center was established at Front Royal, Virginia in August 1942. During the war, five War Dog Reception and Training Centers were operated by the Quartermaster Corps. These were located at Front Royal, Virginia; Fort Robinson, Nebraska; Cat Island, Gulfport, Mississippi; Camp Rimini at Helena, Montana and San Carlos, California. Small temporary training centers were set up at Beltsville, Maryland and Fort Belvoir, Virginia to train mine detection dogs (This task was later transferred to San Carlos). Initially the training program was experimental since dog reception and training was, with the exception of sled dogs, entirely new to the Army.**
- **Total training time for a dog was between 8-12 weeks. At the training centers, dogs began a rigid military routine. A "basic training" period was initiated where dogs were trained to carry out certain fundamental commands such as sit, stay, come, etc... They were also accustomed to muzzles, gas masks, riding in military vehicles and to gunfire. After completion of basic training each dog went through specialized training:**



Sentry Dogs- Worked on a short leash and were taught to give warning by growling, alerting or barking. They were especially valuable for working in the dark when attack from cover or the rear was most likely. The sentry dog was taught to accompany a military or civilian guard on patrol and gave him warning of the approach or presence of strangers within the area protected.



Scout or Patrol Dogs-
In addition to the skills listed for sentry dogs, scout/patrol dogs were trained to work in silence in order to aid in the detection of snipers, ambushes and other enemy forces in a particular locality



Messenger Dogs-The most desired quality in these dogs was loyalty, since he must be motivated by the desire to work with two handlers. They learned to travel silently and take advantage of natural cover when moving between the two handlers. (A total of 151 messenger dogs were trained.)



Mine Dogs- Called the M-Dog or mine detection dog they were trained to find trip wires, booby traps, metallic and non-metallic mines. (About 140 dogs were trained. Only two units were activated. Both were sent to North Africa where the dogs had problems detecting mines under combat conditions.)

WAR DOG USE

- Of the 10,425 dogs trained, around 9,300 were for sentry duty. Trained sentry dogs were issued to hundreds of military organizations such as coastal fortifications, harbor defenses, arsenals, ammunition dumps, airfields, depots and industrial plants. The largest group of sentry dogs (3,174) were trained in 1943 and issued to the Coast Guard for beach patrols guarding against enemy submarine activities.



DEDICATED TO
ALL WAR DOGS AND THEIR HANDLERS
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE
THEIR DEEDS AND SACRIFICES
WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED

Outstanding War Dogs

- Probably the most famous War Dog was Chips. Chips was donated by Edward J. Wren of Pleasantville, New York, was trained at Front Royal , Virginia in 1942, and was among the first dogs to be shipped overseas. He was assigned to the 3d Infantry Division and served with that unit in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France and Germany. His assignments included sentry duty at the Roosevelt-Churchill conference in Casablanca in January 1943. Although trained as a sentry dog, Chips was reported on one occasion by members of Company I, 30th Infantry Regiment, to have broken away from his handler and attacked a pillbox containing an enemy machine gun crew in Sicily. He seized one man and forced the entire crew to surrender. He was also credited by the units to which he was assigned as having been directly responsible for capture of numerous enemy by alerting to their presence. In recognition of his service Chips was awarded the Silver Star and the Purple Heart, both were later revoked. In 1993 Disney produced a TV movie about Chips called "Chips the War Dog".



"Chips" 1943 Signal Corps Photo

- **Dick, a scout dog donated by Edward Zan of New York City, was cited for working with a Marine Corps patrol in the Pacific Area. This dog not only discovered a camouflaged Japanese bivouac but unerringly alerted to the only occupied hut of five, permitting a surprise attack which resulted in annihilation of the enemy without a single Marine casualty. Go to [QM War Dog Platoon is a Combat Unit](#) for more on Dick.**



- **Dogs continued to serve the armed forces with distinction in other conflicts. In the Korean War the Army used about 1,500 dogs, primarily for sentry duty. During the Vietnam War about 4,000 dogs were employed. Of these 281 were officially killed in action. Most recently dogs were deployed to the Persian Gulf War. The oldest memorial to War Dogs in the United States is at the Hartsdale (New York) Pet Cemetery. This memorial was dedicated in 1922 to War Dogs used in World War I. In 1994 a War Dog memorial was dedicated at the U.S. Marine Corps War Dog Cemetery on Guam to honor the dogs that served in the Pacific Theater during World War II. An effort is currently underway to petition the U.S. Postal Service for a stamp honoring military working dogs.**

