



Dog School

(USAF Sentry & Patrol Dog Training)



February 25, 2006

Here we go again – the second edition of “DOG SCHOOL” – who would have thought? This edition will focus on the experiences of our group that were instructors and students of the Dog Schools at Lackland, PACAF, and Germany.

We have so much to tell each other and hopefully this edition will encourage you to get in line to submit your stories to share with our handlers. Good ole days – you betcha! Sit back, look over this issue and enjoy. These were great days for all of us – were those dogs just wonderful and didn't they make us look good?

United States Air Force Sentry Dog School, Lackland AFB, San Antonio, Texas



A/1C ANDERSON
INSTRUCTOR

The name is Vernon J Anderson, MSgt USAF Retired 1982. My Primary AFSC was T81170A Instructor Qualified Dog Handler. I started my dog handling career in 1963 with the 405th AP K9, Philippine Island as an OJT Handler. I was not formally trained until 1965 Wiesbaden Germany at the USAFE Dog Center. While working there I was encouraged by the school instructors to apply for duty as an instructor at Lackland's USAF Sentry Dog School. I was accepted and reported in Oct 1966 and was immediately sent to Technical Instructors School which lasted approximately 280hrs (2 months). I then reported for duty to start training dogs and handlers. The following paragraphs are some of my recollections of my tour 1966 to 1969. I worked here with old training NCO's out of Clark and instructors from Germany.

All classes at that time started on base down at the DOD Dog Center Area with all of the birdcage kennels. You might remember the green colored building which housed the equipment issue cage on the

left side of the hallway, classroom and offices on the right side. A major part of the initial classroom training took place in the Sybil hall (I think) before the kennel time which we then brought you down to the kennels. The classroom training time allowed us to size you up checking your height, weight, personality, attitudes so that we could initially match you up with the dogs we were given for the class.

At the kennels, you were marched into the green building and given all of your equipment: 60 inch leather leash, choke chain, leather collar, leather muzzle, 360 inch web leash and then out the back door into the kennel area. You were shown how to wrap your choke chain into a nice small tight “Blackjack” – remember, hold one ring and about halfway down grip one end of the link and then just swing the loose end over and over until the other ring was up by the other which you then snapped into the leather lease which you had already warped up. Care and cleaning practical applications came later on with the buckets of neat’s-foot oil and a lot of finger and hand rubbing.

NOW CAME THE TIME THAT ALL WERE WAITING FOR! (Some with less enthusiasm than others) Dog and Handler Introductions: Do you remember being taken out into the middle of the birdcages to one particular one where you were given the name of the dog and possibly some information along with “It’s yours and you will have to go in and get him/her”? “Put the choke chain on and take him or her out to the training area”. Did yours “PUCKER” up a little as you walked your dog out between all the others barking and snarling dogs and handlers with theirs? Were you one of the first or last ones to gather yourself up and take a deep breather and say to your self “Here goes – hope like hell I don’t get bit”.

After all students had removed their dogs from the kennels, we spent the first couple days just walking around talking to them building up our relationship and trust – still a little leery but moving on. The instructors moved in and out giving advice, encouragement, or corrections as needed. After some time you were instructed again and shown how to groom your dog and required to do it. Did you have a short hair dog or did you get one of the long haired ones and had hair everywhere especially if it was losing its winter coat.

At the end of the day you went back to the kennels and spent sometime cleaning and raking it, changing water and I think feeding your dog. How did you feel after the first day with your dog? Ten – twenty feet tall – chest out a mile – and knowing that you were now better than any of the other Non-K9 Air Police Trainees or maybe you were still a little apprehensive about “What did I get myself into” but still willing to give it a try.

All initial obedience training was done on base by the grooming sheds – remember those dirt “Idiot Circles” where you went round and round and round forwards and then turning around and going in the other direction. I spent a lot of time on the inside having you go this way, that way, into the center, out of the center. Heel dog, sit dog, down dog, stay dog, end of leash dog, recall dog – can you still do it in your dreams. Basic Obedience was the key to your training – building your relationships with your dog, his/her obedience to you. Grooming was an enjoyable experience for the dog, much more than it was for you. After approx 2-3 weeks on base, you were ready to advance your training in detection and aggression (THE BITE). If you were there before the buildup at Medina you should recall the “Cattle Truck”. You know the blue canvas covered semi tractor trailer that hauled you and your dog to and from Medina Training Areas. The early 0400hrs start and back by about 1200 – 1300Hrs due to heat in summer time.

A decision was made to use Medina as a permanent housing and training area for sentry dog training where the dogs would be moved and kept at Medina during its entire training period. So started the great buildup! We initially had to have the third high voltage fence removed for kennel placement between inner and outer fences. Canvas target cloth was strung on the fences to provide shade and block dogs view. Pea gravel was hauled in and spread to provide a better footing and living area. Shipping crates were used as housing and placed on the inner and outer fences leaving a large walk way down the middle for personnel to move about.

Training areas had to be created and cleared by bulldozers. As we cleaned areas, we opened up dens upon dens of rattlesnakes. The piles of cactus and brush provided cover for others things. A large area was cleared around the old white house to be used for class formations, break area, and basic obedience

(cannot forget that). We eventually turned part of the classroom area into a snack bar which was run by our team – TSgt's Homer and Gildart were in charge of it.

I remember that the vet building sat on a small grass island in the middle of a large concrete pad. As we moved this grass, you could hear and see chunks of snakes being cut up. Now you have to realize that these rattlesnakes were highly prized by the instructor force for use in belts and hat bands and we collected the meat for a large barbeque. Got my ass in trouble with the wife; she found out that I had snuck her electric fry pan out for use with some of the snake meat. Liked to beat me to death before she threw it out – She was deathly afraid of any snake – would not touch a magazine if it had a picture of one in it!



Confidence Course – Lackland AFB – 1968

United States Air Force Europe Sentry Dog School, Wiesbaden, West Germany

(Kelly Bateman)

The United States Air Force opened a second dog school, attached to the 17th AF, United States Air Forces Europe (USAFE) in 1953, at Wiesbaden, West Germany, at the site of a former German officer's school, in Hindenburg Kaserne, a suburb of Biebrich, Germany.





Far East Air Force Sentry Dog Training Center

Showa was the USAF very first Dog School, and it was just plain luck, that it happened to be started during the Korean War. Originally in 1948, FEAF had made a request to HQ USAF for trained US Army sentry dogs; to help stop the huge pilferages losses being suffered by their air bases throughout the Pacific.

In July 1969, during the Vietnam War, the Center was moved one final time, to Kadena Air Base, Okinawa; and on January 1st, 1970, the name was changed once again, this time to the PACAF Military Working Dog Training Center. The school was now controlled by the HQ PACAF Security Police, Hickam AFB, Hawaii. Operational control was transferred to the Security Police Academy, Lackland AFB, Texas, in 1980.

Larry Haynie – 635th Security Police Squadron – 1975-76

Marijuana Dog School

In February of 1973, I was sent TDY to Kadena Air Base, Okinawa. I was currently assigned to the 475th SPS, MWD Section, at Yokota Air Base, Japan. I took my assigned Patrol/Marijuana Dog Prince.

Prince was to be “re-certified” and I was to be formally trained to work a detector dog. Kadena was the location of the PACAF Dog Training School. I was also given a “green dog” (untrained) to teach marijuana detection and her name was Heidi DO38. Heidi was a beautiful 2 year old German Shepard I had two Training Instructors, SSgt Cecil Mott and SSgt John Hicks. Great instructors! I was in a class of ten group of other handlers, who were TDY from other bases in the Pacific Command. The most memorable person in the group was my Class Leader, SSgt William “Bill” Florence. Bill was the “Boss” and yet he was soft-spoken, mild-mannered, and was always willing to help other junior handlers. He was a great role-model as an NCO. I liked him immediately.

The class went smoothly, without major problems. I learned more about detector dogs in those 5 weeks, than ever before. Prince surprisingly, failed to certify initially. I certified with Heidi on the first certification test. I had to re-certify with Prince another day. The saddest thing I remember about Kadena was the day we had to stop training and help the Vet’s Office dispose of dog carcasses. These were the “rejects” from the Dog Donation Program. The school couldn’t return the dogs to their owners, because most didn’t want them back. I carried at least 10 dog bodies myself to the incinerator for cremation. All were beautiful German Shepard’s.

I was sick for a week. The rest of my classmates didn't speak a word to one another for the rest of the day. Upon graduation, I returned to Yokota and resumed my duties as a drug detection handler, in support of the PACAF "Commando Plug" operation.



Larry Haynie and Heidi D038



SSgt Bill Florence and Bobo

Samurai and Sentry Dogs

Larry Haynie, MSgt, USAF-Retired

US Air Force Sentry Dogs & the Japanese Trainers of Showa

Many Americans are unaware of the contributions made by a handful of courageous men, who trained dogs for the US Air Force. In 1952, just 7 years after the end of World War II, a Sentry Dog training school opened in Saitama Prefecture, on the outskirts of Tokyo, Japan. The school was named "Showa". To meet the demands of Air Police units protecting bases in South Korea and the Pacific Theater, The Far East Air Force Sentry Dog School was established to meet those demands for trained Sentry Dog teams. The men who trained these Sentry Dogs at Showa were Japanese.

Upon re-assignment to Yokota Air Base, Japan in August 1977, as a Security Police Dog handler, I met a very remarkable man. His name was Kouhei (pronounced Ko-hay) Tanaka. We became life-long friends. Mr. Tanaka was working as a Kennel Support Attendant. It was during our many talks over coffee that I learned of Mr. Tanaka's experience as a (JT) Japanese Trainer at Showa Sentry Dog School. Mr. Tanaka would tell me of the many Sentry Dogs and young American students he helped train, send off to other bases in the Far East and later on, to a war in South Vietnam.



Mr. Kouhei Tanaka - Japanese Trainer (JT)
Showa Sentry Dog School



Recollections of the PACAF Dog School

(Ken Neal – Ubon 1968-69 & Udorn 1974-75)

After our tour in Thailand most of the handlers who were single were retained in PACAF. The married guys went home. So in March 1969 I was assigned to the 824 SPS/K-9 section at Kadena AFB, Okinawa along with a number of other handlers from Thailand and Vietnam.

We did the usual Sentry Dog thing in the munitions storage areas and MACE missile sites for a few months. In about late May the call went out for handlers to work kennel support for the newly arriving PACAF Dog School. I threw my name into the hat along with quite a few others.

The announcement that I was selected along with Dan Brusseau (Ubon), Ken Hamilton (Udorn), Jim Rector (Pleiku), and a few others was met with great expectations. We were all looking forward to a change of duty and thought this just might be the thing.

Our first duties were to prepare for the arrival of the dogs from Showa. We worked the old style raised kennels, cut grass, prepared classrooms and did general busy work pending the arrival of the dogs.

The Showa staff of MSgt. Jerry Holmes, Sergeants Walsh, Homer, and Potter arrived along with the C-141's carrying the dogs. I remember we used 40' flatbed trailers to haul the dogs from the flight line to the new site at Bishagawa near the 1st Special Forces Group area off base. The site was somewhat isolated and in a natural depression in the surrounding hills. We thought nothing of it at the time. This was intended to be temporary kennel areas until the new kennels were constructed overlooking this temporary site.

Life was good because we were not subject to most of the recalls and other normal SP extra duty assignments. We were responsible for the kennel and it's up keep, which turned out to be quite a task when we had a full component of dogs and students. We did kennel duty with shovels and wheel barrels if you follow my drift. As most of us were newly promoted E-4's we were not quartered in the barracks, as there was a shortage of enlisted housing at the time. Two guys took up residence at the school site in an old Quonset hut, the rest of us were living in a hotel in the city of Futema, about 8-10 miles away.

Things went well and we seemed to be rotating quite a few folks through school. In order to shorten school time we were assigned duties to train the green dogs in basic obedience. This cut about 2 weeks of instruction from the classes.

We received regular shipments of dogs from stateside and had a large turn over. Of course we had our share of bad dogs that it seemed no one could handle. One fateful night in the monsoon season it started to rain. We had just received a planeload of new dogs and the kennels were full. The base was buttoned down for the storm and I was in the hotel enjoying the second floor bar.

The hotel got a call for the dog school folks to get ready to return to the school so we were rounded up to await transportation. Our transportation arrived and the two of us who could be found were taken to the kennels at the school. As we approached we were shocked to see the kennel area filling with the rainwater. Though not deep at the time, it was evident that we needed to move the dogs to higher ground. We had lots of the aluminum shipping crates and we started the project. About an hour into the move we were down to just a few dogs and were running out of places to put them. As we worked out the logistics of using open space at the 824th kennels about 200 yards from the school the water continued to drain off the surrounding hills into the natural bowl where the school kennels were. No one wanted to be stuck with the bad dog, he bit almost everyone once. When it came time to move him he was sitting on top of his kennel and was very docile. The water was almost chest high by this time and he was very happy to swim out. It took a few days to drain the lake that was created by the monsoon. Mr. Bad dog changed his ways and was certified to an army troop in the next class and went to Viet Nam.

The new kennels were well under construction by this time and we were looking forward to relocation. Near the end of my tour the personnel bulldozing an area in preparation for further kennel construction broke through the top of a natural cave complex. When the engineers had a close look they found an underground storage from world war two Japanese supplies. They filled the hole without removing the old Japanese stuff, as they feared it was booby-trapped.

I left the school in November 1970 and separated. I can truly say it was one heck of an assignment and I enjoyed working for Holmes and his staff.

Air Force K-9 Team – Patrol Dogs

In 1966, Lt. Colonel John Cady, a veterinarian, assigned to Headquarters USAF Security Police, initiated the action that resulted in changing training methods, so that dogs could be used for many other purposes.

It was Cady who made the suggestion to Robin A. Baker, then the Chief of Security Police at Andrews AFB, while on a tour of the Squadron, to send four Air Force sentry dogs through the Metropolitan Police Dog School for patrol dog training.

Major Baker thought Cady suggestion, sounded like a great idea, and he sought and was granted approval, from the base commander, Brig. General Polhamus, to send five people, one supervisor and four dogs through the school.

The Met training lasted several weeks; when the team and dogs returned to Andrew, training and tests continued and demonstrations were conducted for the public, and HQ USAF officials.

Finally in 1967, the Air Force approved the program, and the Andrew's team and the four dogs, along with trainers from the Metropolitan Police Dog School went to Lackland AFB to help establish the patrol dog program at the AF Security Police Dog Training School.

Training objectives for patrol dogs aim for a composed, discriminating, controllable animal for detecting intruders and subsequent aggressive attack when commanded by their handlers.

Patrol dogs are trained not to be disturbed by the approach of people and to discriminate between a threat and acceptance of others by the handler.

They are trained to remain alert, not to become excited by strangers, and to willingly enter vehicles with other people and dogs without becoming hostile.

The patrol dog is trained to be obedient both on- and off - leash. It will enter an empty building to search for hidden intruders or cover an area to find a lost or concealed object.

The patrol dog is trained to press an attack at the command of its handler with the aggressiveness of a sentry dog, but unlike the sentry dog, can be called off the attack at any time.

Patrol Dog School (Charlie Brugnola)

By 1967, the USAF approved the new dogs and the Patrol Dog program was initiated at the new Security Police Dog Training School, at Lackland, as the new standard AF military working dog.

The program produce dogs that could be worked in a crowded public place, dogs that could be approached by any child and petted like a normal dog, but would attack only on command.

Very quickly, the patrol dog team became a common sight worldwide, at base exchanges and commissaries throughout the Air Force.

FRONT ROW: SGT CISCO/YUKON, A/C BRADBURY/ENNO, SGT BRADLEY/MISSY, A/C CALLINTINE/TURK, SGT LARSON/SMOKEY, A/C PEASLEE/SHADOW, SGT RITTICHER/BAMBI, SGT TOWNS/GREYWOLF, A/C LANDIS/PRINCE
 SECOND ROW: SGT JOHNSON/ROCKY, SGT SHEKELLS/CEASAR, A/C LANGFORD/STEELE, SGT SHIVE/BINGO, A/C GIBSON/SPIKE, A/C POTTER/RAVEN, A/C FRISK/DUKE, A/C HUNTER/BENQ, A/C LAPLANTE/ILEX
 THIRD ROW: SGT YANEZ/CEASAR, A/C LLOYD/ KING, A/C BERKOWITZ/BUCK, SGT MATTSON/MAJOR, A/C NISSEN/SHADOW, A/C CONKLIN/NUGGET, A/C PUCE/SAINT, A/C BRUGNOLA/ASTOR, A/C BORDERS/SULLY



							
		T. SGT. HOOTZY ASS'T INSTR. SUPER	S.M.S. WALKER INSTR. SUPERVISOR	T. SGT. WITT INSTRUCTOR	T. SGT. MIXON INSTRUCTOR		
			INSTRUCTORS				
		T. SGT. GILDART INSTRUCTOR	T. SGT. BLACKWELL T. SGT. DOVER S. SGT. DRYSDALE S. SGT. LEAK S. SGT. CONNORS S. SGT. ROSENFEIT		T. SGT. RATLIFF INSTRUCTOR		
U.S.A.F. FIRST PATROL DOG CLASS LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS SEPTEMBER 1968							

Provided by Charlie Brugnola (Student – First Patrol Dog Class – September 1968)
 Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, Arizona