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Report on War Dogs

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HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES
CHINA BURMA INDIA

AUTH., C.G., U.S.A.F., CBI
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A.P.O. 885
5 September 1944

SUBJECT: Report on War Dogs.

by *lynkms*

E. S. JOHNSTON
Colonel, Infantry

SEP 11 1945

TO : Chief of Staff, War Department, Washington 25, D.C.

1. This report is submitted in accordance with radio
WAR 22929 dated 14 April 1944.

2. Distribution of War Dogs in Theater.

- At present on duty in this Theater is a War Dog Detachment consisting of 1 line officer, 1 Veterinary officer, 66 dogs and dog handlers, and two veterinary technicians. In addition there are 24 War Dogs and handlers assigned to ATC.

These dogs are being used in two capacities.

- a. as scout dogs for combat forces
- b. as sentry dogs around various installations.

Forty-two dogs and handlers are with Northern Combat Area command, twenty-three on duty with the 5332 Brigade, Provisional, in the combat zone in Northern Burma, and nineteen more in training with the 5332 Brigade, Provisional, at Rangarh Training Center in India. These are the combat dogs.

Twenty-four dogs and handlers from the CBI War Dog Detachment are with Advance Section #2, and the twenty-four assigned to ATC are being used at Stations 6, 7 and 9, all in the Chabua, Assam area. These are the sentry dogs.

3. General.

The value of the war dogs increases with use and experience in handling. Use in combat operations has been limited to date. It is definitely believed that the sentry dogs who save sentry personnel, while achieving greater and more effective coverage, and the scout dogs who save lives by preventing ambushes, enabling patrols to move more freely, and search out snipers, are worthwhile adjuncts to the military service.

4. Sentry Dogs.

These are being used in the Chabua area to guard ammunition dumps. These dumps were admittedly insecurely patrolled prior to using the dogs. Now with adequate coverage being effected, the savings

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in manpower averages three men saved per man-dog team. In one instance, a pilferer crept into a small arms ammunition godown at night while the man and dog were at the far end of the line of warehouses on the opposite side. In less than a minute when the dog turned the corner he indicated the presence of the prowler who was immediately driven off with no damage. This person was in the warehouse where a man would never have discovered him. Poor marksmanship because of the darkness prevented his capture, but he was discovered before he had opportunity to cause damage or theft.

The ATC dogs are guarding gasoline storage tanks, where personnel savings average four men for one dog team; plane dispersal areas with personnel savings from three men for one dog sentry team to twelve men for one team, nose hangars, four men for one team, and radio stations three men for one team.

Satisfaction has been expressed by the unit commanders concerned, and in most cases desire for additional dogs has been indicated.

5. Scout Dogs.

The Scout Dogs, though only used during the last thirty-seven days of the Myitkyina operation, were successful to the extent that full cognizance is taken of them in planning future moves.

On three distinct occasions these dogs prevented the patrol with whom they were working from walking into a superior enemy force without the enemy knowing that the patrol was in the area.

On seven occasions when there were known snipers in an area which had been hunted to no avail by men alone, application of the dogs resulted in their speedy location and liquidation.

In one instance a lone enemy filtered into a CP area where many men were sleeping and one dog who was not working was chained. This Jap was armed with a bag of hand grenades and evidently intended to drop them into the occupied fox holes. He crawled too close to the dog, who since he had no man with him took care of the situation himself by knocking the Jap down and chewing both legs so badly that the enemy pulled the pin on one of the grenades and rolled over on it.

During the mopping up phase two Japanese soldiers were observed crossing a rice paddy and entering the jungle. Immediately a patrol, including a dog and handler went after them. After hunting for several hours the dog indicated the presence of an enemy, though nothing was in sight. The patrol leader was slightly skeptical, and told the dog handler to shoot where he thought they were. One burst from a Thompson killed one Jap and brought the other up out of hiding where he was killed by the patrol.

6. Limitations and miscellaneous comments.

- a. The dogs must be handled only by their own masters and the scout dog must lead the patrol in order to work effectively.
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b. Information is lacking in the Theater as to the procedure for obtaining replacement dogs in the event of dog casualties.

c. Considerable difficulty was experienced in getting the war dogs and handlers into the CBI Troop Basis. The dog handlers were shipped to the Theater as casualties. It was found that while area and combat unit commanders were anxious to try out the dogs, they were unwilling to make any vacancies in T/O units to which vacancies the dog handlers could be assigned. Eventually units were deleted from the Troop Basis to provide for a war dog detachment. It is believed that a cellular T/O and E for war dog units would greatly facilitate the use of war dogs and would set up a definite standard of grades and ratings for war dog personnel.

d. While additional war dogs can be used advantageously in the Theater, particularly for sentry work, on the basis of present experience we cannot delete any units from the Troop Basis to provide for additional war dogs.

e. Additional report will be submitted following more complete use of dogs in combat operations.

For the Commanding General:

/s/ EDWIN O. SHAW
Lt. Col., A.G.D.,
Acting Adj. Gen.

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