



MAC Chris Ray photo

MA1 Mitchell Young stands tall and proud as he poses for a photo with his 12 officer (six men and six K-9s) military working dog team.

Man's best friend is Man's best partner

By J03 Sunday Sawyer
Staff Writer

It's been said that a dog is man's best friend. According to the law enforcement officers who are assigned to Pearl Harbor's military K-9 unit, the dogs who work on their team are not only their best friends, but they are also loyal and devoted partners.

"There is no way to compare the bond that you have with that K-9 to the one you have with another person. There is just an unbelievable loyalty there and extreme trust," said Master at Arms First Class (MA1) Ronald Lombardi.

Several of the officers in the unit said that they prefer a K-9 partner to a person "because of the fear and respect that a dog brings as well as safety."

"A lot of people have no respect for police officers, but once you bring out that dog they instantly change their attitude and show the dog and the officer a little more respect," said MA1 Shaune Murphy.

Meet Blero, Breston, Buck, Fisco, Loeke and Rex – the dogs assigned to the K-9 unit at Pearl Harbor. They go above and beyond the call of duty to protect and serve the community but as a reward for their efforts, they'd prefer a chew toy instead of a medal. The dogs serve as drug and bomb detection specialists as well as patrol dogs.

"Both the dogs and the handlers work really hard and I am really proud of all of them. I think that we have really good kennels here," said MAC Chris Ray.

The dogs and their handlers go through extensive training and schools such as the Department of Defense Military Working Dog Program, which is managed by the United States Air Force.

The school is located at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas where the DOD K-9 competition took place this year. Pearl Harbor's K-9 Fisco took fourth place in narcotic detection out of 45 military working dog teams at that event.

"I think that when your dog does something well that it is a huge reflection on the handler. I am very proud of Fisco," said MA1 Lombardi.

PHAN Casey James does some hands-on training with one of the dogs assigned to the K-9 unit.



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in Belgium in 1900 and its popularity spread quickly. Though there are several different canine breeds with especially keen senses that are used for special purposes, such as detecting caches of illegal drugs or for tracking fugitives and missing persons, the most widely-trained dog for regular patrol work is the German shepherd.

"My dog Buck is a black Labrador and a lot of people do not realize that he is a police dog because of the myth that we only use German shepherds," said MA2 Robinson Lucero.

Over the years, numerous schools have been established throughout the world to train dogs for law enforcement agencies. The dogs undergo scheduled training just like officers to keep everything fresh in their minds but the handlers also devote a lot of extra time to training with the dogs.

"A good handler will put all of his time into his dog," said MA2 Dodge.

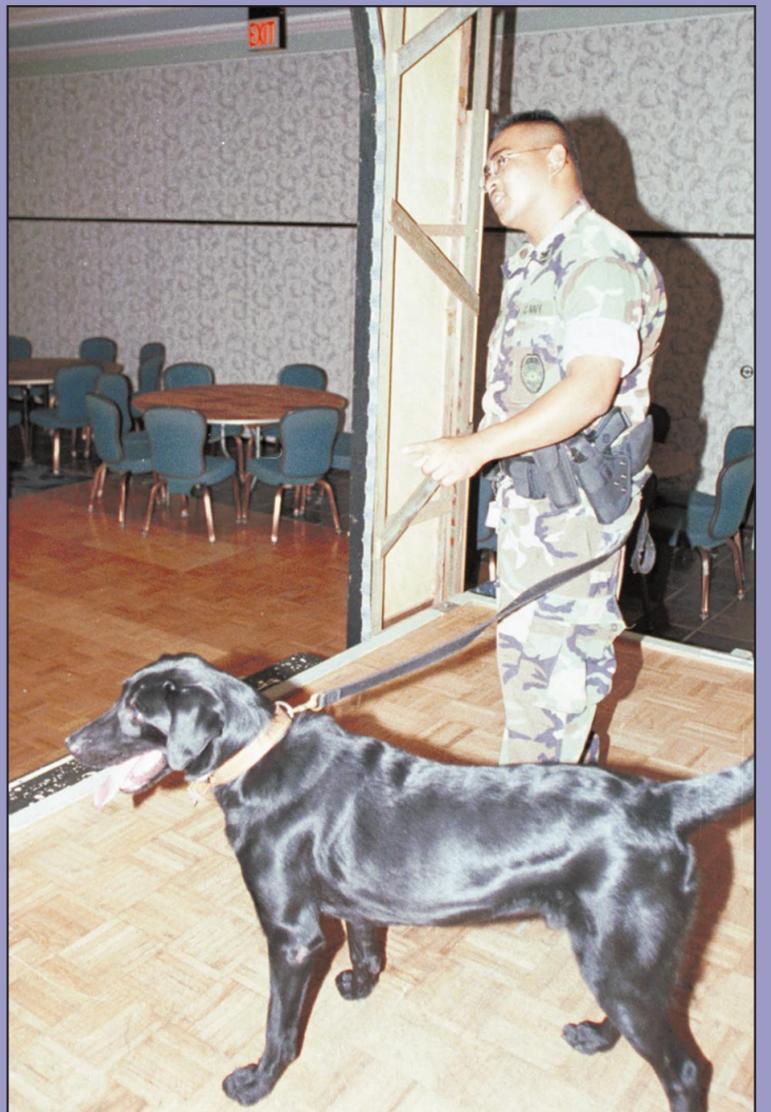
The use of dogs to protect property and lives has increased dramatically. Protection is needed to deter terrorist activities and reduce the probability of terrorist bombings. Dog teams have proven to be a highly effective detection device and are one of the best psychological deterrents to terrorism that is available.

Due to the overwhelming use of illegal narcotics in our society, most law enforcement agencies have a narcotic detection dog unit. The dogs are trained to locate illegal narcotics and indicate to the handler where they are hidden.

Scouting dogs are trained to locate human odor, as was the case in the Oklahoma City bombing, after the bombing dog teams assisted with locating persons trapped under the debris.

Patrol dogs assist the handler in apprehending suspects by attacking the suspects and holding on until the handler gives the command to release. The dog must adhere to the handler's commands even in adverse situations such as gunfights and brawls.

For more information on military working dogs, visit the Department of Defense Military Working Dog website at www.dodmwd.lackland.af.mil. For additional information on Pearl Harbor's dog program or to schedule a demonstration, call MA1 Young 449-5939.



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MA2 Robinson Lucero and his partner Buck get advice from MA1 Shaune Murphy after scanning a building for explosives in a training scenario.



MA1 Ronald Lombardi photo

MA1 Ronald Lombardi's partner Fisco found 3.84 pounds of crystal methamphetamine that holds a street value of \$302,000.