The Military Police at Lackland Air Force Base

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Company D of the 701st Military Police Battalion at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas, is where military working dog handlers and their canine partners start their careers. This is also where our MP personnel come to attend the Traffic Management and Accident Investigation Course. This is a very rewarding assignment that allows a soldier to work in a joint service environment that trains and prepares soldiers and canines for worldwide deployment.

History

Since World War II, the unit has been known by different names. Originally, it was under the operational control of the Quartermaster Corps in Front Royale, Virginia, and later, the infantry at Fort Carson, Colorado. The Army Dog Training Center at Fort Carson was primarily used from 1954 to 1957 to train military working dogs (MWDs) for the U.S. Air Force. In 1957, the center was deactivated and responsibility for the training was transferred to the Sentry Dog Training Branch at Lackland in 1958.

An Army detachment consisting of six dog handler instructors, one noncommissioned officer, and one clerk went to Lackland to serve as a support unit. Over the years, the detachment trained thousands of soldiers and canines. During the Vietnam War, the Army was responsible for training scout dogs, combat tracker dogs, mine dogs, tunnel dog teams, and marijuana detector dog teams at Fort Gordon, Georgia. In June 1973, the interservice training review executive committee decided to centralize all MWD training at Lackland. (This was the same year that the last marijuana detector dog graduated from the U.S. Army Military Police School [USAMPS] at Fort Gordon.)

January 1974 was the start of the new centralized U.S. Army Military Working Dog School at Lackland. The U.S. Army Military Police School Training Detachment was also established there on 2 October 1974. On 10 November 1982, the detachment was redesignated as the Lackland Training Detachment of the 701st Military Police Battalion, assigned to Fort McClellan, Alabama, and attached to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, with duty at Lackland. On 5 December 2002, the detachment was redesignated as Company D, 701st Military Police Battalion, 14th Military Police Brigade. The company's mission is to:

• Provide expert instructors to the Department of Defense Military Working Dog School and the Traffic Management and Accident Investigation Course.

• Advise the USAMPS Commandant and Director of Training about the training and employment of MWDs and the Traffic Management Accident Investigation training.

• Provide the operational Army with current training techniques and procedures.

• Provide command and control, training, and administrative and logistical support to students and staff.

MWD Handler Course

The 341st Training Squadron oversees the MWD Handler Course, with instructors from all four branches of service. Because college credit is awarded for this course through the Community College of the Air Force, instructors must have an associate's degree to teach. Instructors must also complete a six-month subject matter qualification process before they are allowed to teach without a subject matter instructor present. The Army has nine instructors teaching in this course.

An instructor introduces search patterns to a new canine recruit.

Students are trained in two blocks of instruction. The first is a six-week block during which students learn the aspects of handling a *patrol dog*. The first four days involve classroom instruction. Students learn about maintaining dog gear, performing safety procedures, maintaining kennels, managing health, using first aid, applying the principles of behavioral conditioning, documenting training, and maintaining utilization records. Other classroom instruction includes these topics:

- Concepts of utilization
- Use of force
- Vehicle patrol
- Performing as a decoy

On the fifth day of training, the students are assigned an MWD. Once the students have established rapport with the dog, the hands-on portion of their training begins. Students learn dog training principles: basic obedience, running the dog over obstacles, building search procedures, locating a suspect in a building, scouting, locating a suspect in a field or wood line, controlled aggression, how to apprehend a suspect, and control under gunfire. At the end of the six weeks, each student must complete a performance test for the instructor supervisor before being certified as a patrol dog handler.

In the second block of instruction, students learn about handling a *detector dog*. The first day of the five-week block is classroom instruction during which students learn more about behavioral conditioning, protocol training, detecting an odor, and proficiency training (how to maintain a dog's level of training). Other classroom instruction includes the following:

- Using detector dog teams
- Documenting training and utilization records
- Securing explosives, chemicals, and drugs
- Using detector dogs legally and safely

Students also learn about handling a detector dog in a variety of areas: barracks/buildings, warehouses, vehicles, and aircraft. Students run through many scenarios. Some simulate narcotic searches, and others are set up as explosives searches. By using both scenarios, students see the different aspects of detection work. At the end of five weeks, students are once again given a performance test before being certified as detector dog handlers. Students graduating from the handler course know the basics. Like all personnel who are new to a job, the handlers need advanced training after they are assigned to a kennel. On average, the handler course trains and certifies more than 400 MWD handlers annually.

Members of all the services and their canines represent the dog training school at a ceremony in San Antonio, Texas.

Dog Training Section

The Dog Training Section (DTS) is a multiservice Department of Defense organization with 80 personnel. Twenty-four Army military police are attached to the 341st Training Squadron. The DTS trains the dual-certified explosive/patrol detector dogs and drug/patrol detector dogs for all branches of the military to deploy worldwide. On average, the DTS produces 250 dual-certified MWDs annually. During the last two years, the DTS produced more than 500 MWDs. Following 11 September 2001, the DTS produced 157 MWDs in a six-month period with a personnel strength of just 60 percent. This was a remarkable achievement that the DTS had never accomplished before.

Beginning in October 2002, the DTS developed a new MWD course to monitor dog training. The class is divided into four blocks. Block one consists of building socialization/rapport with the assigned handler. Block two is basic obedience (commands such as sit, down, and stay). Block three is detection, and block four is patrol. This is based on a 100-day training cycle to dual-certify and ship MWDs to the field. Explosive/patrol detector dogs are trained and certified to detect (at or above a 95 percent accuracy rate) nine different explosive odors in many different areas: offices, barracks, theaters, and warehouses, and inside luggage, aircraft, and vehicles. Drug/patrol detector dogs are trained and certified to detect (at or above 90 percent accuracy rate) four different drug odors in many different areas: barracks, warehouses, and offices, and inside luggage, aircraft, and vehicles. After the MWD is trained in explosive/drug detection, it is then trained in patrol, which consists of

obedience, out and guard, building search, gunfire, and scouting.

Out and guard is a technique that has been used by many other countries and law enforcement agencies. For years we trained our MWDs to attack a suspect and return to the handler on command. Now we train them to attack and guard the suspect until the handler can approach and detain the individual. This training incorporates field interviews, attack, search and reattack, escort, and stand off.

All phases of patrol training include both combat support and law enforcement aspects. If a building has been found unsecured, a MWD team can clear it better and faster than an MP team. In a combat-support role, a MWD team can help an infantry platoon clear a building in an urban combat situation. Only the amount and type of training the MWD has received will limit its use.

Traffic Management and Accident Investigations Course

This course, taught by the 324th Training Squadron, consists of 17 school days (133 course hours) designed to teach multiservice military law enforcement personnel and occasionally local police officers. This course is not an entry-level course, but intermediate-level accident investigation training designed to bring the student's abilities nearly to an advanced level within 17 days. After graduation, students are well prepared for most accident investigations and the next level of instruction at other advanced courses. The facility at Lackland has two classrooms: one with large drafting tables for plenty of space for the diagramming (drawing a sketch of the accident scene) exercises and another equipped with computers for report writing and diagramming exercises.

The course has a traffic pad—an 800- by 600-foot area—that encompasses five traffic accident mock-ups: three vehicle-to-vehicle accidents, one vehicle-to-motorcycle accident, and one vehicle-to-pedestrian accident. There is also a rollover mock-up for our advanced course, which will be operational next year. At the traffic pad, students are given an accident scenario and are required to take measurements, draw diagrams, take photographs, and complete an accident report. By the final exam, all students have worked at least four accident scenes and have used the various applications learned in the course. Topics include the following:

- Analyzing accident components
- Investigating hit-and-run accidents
- Diagramming
- Examining legal issues
- Photographing accidents
- Planning traffic management
- Understanding the implications of drug and alcohol impairment
- Writing accident reports
- Computing formulas (used to find the skid speeds and other estimated speeds involved in an accident).

There are two written tests and a 12-hour final exam. There are several progress checks during the diagramming, photography, and formulas week. (This is when we lose the most students.) The student attrition rate of 15 to 20 percent is due mostly to poor organizational skills, not to difficulty with the course's mathematics. Commanders selecting soldiers for attendance should evaluate the soldier's organization skills, maturity, and self-study habits, and should send them to the education office to take the general mathematics College-Level Examination Program #07030. Taking this exam will refresh the soldier's math skills in preparation for formulas week.

The course has some great ventures on the horizon. In the next few months, we will receive a new technology package: PalmPilots®, laser equipment, diagramming and report writing software, and laptops that will reduce the time of our final exam by 7 to 9 hours. The impact of traffic investigation in the field can be enormous. It can provide commanders, families, legal authorities, civil engineers, and insurance companies with a quicker, more accurate and professional product that provides an answer or conclusion to an accident. Instructors train approximately 250 to 300 students annually, with classes running back-to-back each month, and conduct one to three mobile training team visits overseas per year. The U.S. Army Military Police Corps has three instructor positions. The course is reviewed continuously to meet the demands of technology and the Department of Defense operational force.