

Operation Lassie

By Ms. Bonnie Heater

Military working dogs (MWDs) from five installations joined canine drug-detection teams at Fort Gordon, Georgia, to sniff out illegal drugs there. Operation Lassie, a surprise health and welfare inspection of barracks and privately owned vehicles (POVs) at the 15th Signal Brigade, took place on 31 May 2006. It was a coordinated effort between the Directorate of Emergency Services and the brigade, according to Lieutenant Colonel Richard Karlsson, the installation's director of emergency services.

"We sent out a message to other major commands to get support for this search, and we got positive responses. Canine drug-detection teams from Fort Drum, New York; Fort Polk, Louisiana; Fort Rucker, Alabama; and Forts Belvoir and Myer in Virginia sent their dogs and dog handlers to assist us," he said. During Operation Lassie, a thorough search of the barracks and POVs was performed by nine MWD teams. A 100-percent urinalysis was also conducted as part of the effort. Following the nine-hour operation, the brigade commander conducted an outbriefing and awards ceremony for the MWD teams. Ten Soldiers received Army Achievement Awards, seven received certificates of achievement, and six received coins from the brigade commander.

"We are recognizing the technical proficiency of the canine dog handlers on the team," said Lieutenant Colonel Dwayne Williams, deputy brigade commander. The dogs received toy hand grenades, and their handlers received special clickers to use in training the dogs.

Ms. Heater is a staff writer for the Fort Gordon newspaper, the Signal.



A POV is inspected for drugs.