

Dogs Work In AF, But Lonely Death Waits Them

FRANKFURT, Germany (UPI)—Generals fade away, soldiers retire, horses are put out to pasture.

But when a U.S. Air Force guard dog gets old, he has to die.

The Air Force has some 500 German shepherd dogs, or Alsations guarding lonely posts throughout Europe.

When a dog gets too old or unfit for duty, it is painlessly put to sleep.

Some airmen, however, don't give up their dogs without a fight, according to officials at the Air Force dog training school in Wiesbaden, Air Force headquarters in Europe.

One such airman was A. I. C. Tom Rhodes, who was based in France.

When the time came for Rhodes' dog "Blitz" to be put to sleep, the airman took his fight to save the dog's life all the

way to the Pentagon.

Now, on orders of Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Thomas D. White, Blitz lives in retirement in Wiesbaden.

But he is an exception. Officials explain that disposing of the guard dogs is unpleasant, but necessary.

They are trained to attack and kill, and the Air Force doesn't want to take the chance of returning them to civilian life, where they may revert to the savage ways drilled into them in service.

The Air Force can be held legally responsible for injuries

caused by a dog as a result of his training, and this risk the Air Force is not prepared to take.

There's no age or length of service limit for the dogs.

Kennel operators have to judge when dogs cannot perform their duties efficiently any longer. Some dogs work until 8 years of age, some until 11.

The dogs and their handlers are trained at Wiesbaden during a special five-week course. The animals are taught to obey only one person, and when a handler is transferred or leaves the service, they have to be re-trained.

The sentry dogs work only on isolated posts and only during hours of darkness. One dog takes the place of three or four men.

Of any color except white, the shepherd dogs are bought by the

military from the German Shepherd club, Germany's equivalent of the American Kennel Club.

If the dogs do not respond to training, they are put to sleep and not returned to their previous owners.

But officials said that during the past five years, there were

only two cases of dogs which had to be disposed of because they couldn't be trained.

The Air Force has a special canine cemetery in Wiesbaden where guard dogs are buried with proper funeral ceremonies.

Men's Heads Get Bigger

NEW YORK (UPI)—The National Camp and Cloth Hat Institute reports that the heads of American men are getting bigger.

Twenty years ago the average man's head size was 67", according to the institute. Nowadays, most of the headwear purchased is 71" and larger.

Medical authorities attribute the trend toward bigger heads to the general physical growth of Americans as they take advantage of health and nutrition developments.

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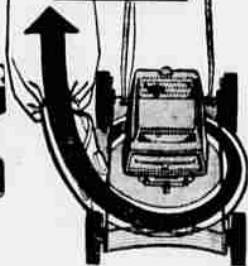
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