

Black K-9 Beret History – (1968-1976)

Ben Cox

(1967 – 1968)

Thai Gift Dog Tina 9M69

Reference the Black Beret at U-Tapao, TSgt. Tom Swartz & I purchased a few berets and had a K-9 blue back ground with a Dogs head in yellow made up for the Beret. I still have the original Beret.

We were authorized by the 635th Squadron Commander to wear either the Black Beret or the "Aussie" type hat. However during the first months of 1968 after the Dog Teams arrived we were still working on the Kennel, etc., and no one from the Squadron paid much attention to us.

I'll bet Dave Broeker and Jim Dorris will remember the Beret. Back then we did pretty much as we wanted to do, since we had to do most of the work on the Kennels that the Red Horse troops failed to do.

Dave Broeker

(June 1967-June 1968)

Thai Gift Dog Ara 9M72

I feel the need to back up Ben Cox's statement 100%, concerning the black beret. It seemed like it made everyone but us dog handlers jealous. But then, as you know, we WERE better than the average SP!

I'd give anything to still have my beret, but I've searched everywhere for it and it's nowhere to be found. I'm thinking I might have passed it on to "Second Wave" member, A1C Harold Horn, along with the Iowa flag, just prior to leaving for the states.

Ron Saville

(November 1968-1969)

Sentry Dog Shep 69M1

I think that you have pretty much hit the nail on the head. I guess that we wanted to have the berets as we considered ourselves a little bit better than the average SP and wanted something to show it. Naturally we had the emblem made locally but the catch was that we could only wear it while working on post. Therefore, the guys didn't see much use in having it if that was the only place that you could wear it as only you and your dog knew about it. So a lot of the guys stopped wearing them. Ben was right that about the base commander saying that it caused jealousy and resentment among the rest of the SP's. I guess it was the early edition of when the Army let everyone wear the black beret that really belongs to the Rangers.

Mike Monger

(July 1969-1970)

Sentry Dog Pistol 540M

When I got there the end of July of 1969, K-9 was not allowed to wear the beret. The demo team might have been able to wear them at a demo. However, just a month or so before I left it was stated that we could have berets again. But, that the only time we could wear them was when we were out on post at night. Therefore, since I was so "short" at that time, I refused to buy one if I could only wear it out on post. But, I now regret not getting one to have had an original for a keepsake. But, I was stubborn as a mule back then and could not see what that beret would have meant to me in later years. As it has been said, "Hind sight is 20/20." As for the blue emblem, I have no idea why it was changed.

Ron Saville could probably give you the full run down on why the berets were suddenly forbidden to K-9. Since, I know he had one at the time I got there but could no longer wear it around the base or on post etc. I think I recall hearing something about the base commander at that time saying that with K-9 wearing berets, it might cause jealousy and/or division among the troops. But, I cannot swear to that.