



Skippy leads his handler, Staff Sgt. Malanie Darby, 437th Security Forces Squadron K-9 section, to an explosive hidden in the trunk of a vehicle.

It's a dog day afternoon at the base kennels

By Staff Sgt. Pamela Smith
437 AW Public Affairs

The average dog rolls over to receive praise. But Skippy is anything but average, so his praise comes when he finds an explosive in the trunk of a vehicle.

Skippy, a Belgian Malinois, is a member of the 437th

Security Force K-9 section and his job is to search and protect.

"A K-9's primary mission is to detect trouble and warn the handler," said Staff Sgt. Robert Goslee, who's been a military working dog trainer for eight years. "The dogs go through almost four months of training. They spend five to eight weeks in search training and five to eight weeks in protection training."

"All dogs are now dual certified in patrol and detection, unlike before," said Goslee. Patrol certification means dogs are qualified to do building and area searches, whereas detection certification means a dog can detect either drugs or explosives.

When dogs are assigned to a base, their training continues on a regular basis. "They go through 10 hours of refreshment training a month," said Goslee. The training benefits the handlers as well by preparing them for real-world situations that may occur.

Base K-9 handlers also assist with local situations when they arise. "We support civilian authorities when called upon," said Goslee.

Skippy is one of seven dogs assigned to the 437 SFS K-9 section. Each dog is matched with a human partner until one of them PCS's, retires or goes through a job change, as is the case for Staff Sgt. Malanie Darby, who's been a MWD trainer for almost two years.

Darby is the new kennel master and her job includes handling the section taskings and certifications. The new job also means no more patrols with Skippy, her partner since May 1998.

"It's going to be hard to let him go," Darby said. "We've been together for 19 months and I'm going to miss the companionship."

Skippy won't have time to dwell on Darby's job change though. His new partner will arrive in January and the dog will be back to patrolling as usual.

photos by Staff Sgt Andrew Rodier



Darby stands by as her partner, Skippy, locates explosives planted in a vehicle.



(above) Skippy makes his way over the A-frame on the kennel obstacle course. The A-frame helps the dogs maintain agility and is used to teach them to climb walls if needed.

(below) Skippy takes a little time for himself and plays some frisbee.



Darby and Skippy play after training.

