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From: "Carleen, Barry D (CIV-NSA) FC" <bdcarle@ [redacted]>

(b) (3)-P.L. 86-36

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(U) CRYPTOLOGIC ALMANAC: 50TH ANNIVERSARY SERIES

(U) An Extra Degree of Protection: NSA's K-9 Employees

(U) In the long history of security at NSA, there have been many accounts of the accomplishments of the dedicated men and women who, in many ways, protect the NSA workforce and the physical plant. In recent years-probably too recent for there to be an extensive "history"-a new chapter has been added to the security story.

(U//~~FOUO~~) Imagine this: You are chauffeured daily to work in your own specially equipped vehicle by your best buddy and work a seven-hour day with breaks every half hour. You receive manicures and pedicures and always have perfect hair. Someone brings food once or twice a day, draws a bath or starts a shower, maintains your special vehicle and your private space. And you receive a reward for every good deed.

(U//~~FOUO~~) If this sounds like the perfect job, it is in many respects, but it is an actual job. This is the story of the [redacted] fuzzy, four-legged employees of the National Security Agency and their two-legged partners that take such good care of them because their lives are in the "paws" of the dogs every day.

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(U//~~FOUO~~) Co-located on Perimeter Road with Visitor Center 2, the K-9 kennels opened in April 2002 along with the visitor control and the Vehicle Cargo Inspection Facility (VCIF). The VC logs in visitors and the VCIF inspects cargo; the VCIF has [redacted] if they are "sniffed." The kennel facility has [redacted] kennels with heated floors indoors and out, a food room for dogs and people, shower facilities and grooming table for the dogs, and shower facilities and universal gym with free weights for the handlers.

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(U//~~FOUO~~) As part of the Perimeter Security Antiterrorism program, NSA started this program with [redacted] dogs in 1998. [redacted] more were added in 1999, [redacted] in 2000, and [redacted] in 2001 in response to September 11. The K-9 teams consist mostly of [redacted] which are hearty, hard-working breeds. The dogs are [redacted] and purchased from [redacted]. Each handler picks a partner and goes through extensive training [redacted] several weeks of on-the-job training, and sixteen hours of mandatory training per month. The monthly training occurs at different of places so that the dog experiences a variety of new surroundings. The K-9 teams partner with other agencies, police departments, state of Maryland, and the military. A few of the handlers have become certified trainers.

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(U//~~FOUO~~) This is a 24/7 operation, and the job is by no means easy to do

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or easy to get. One requirement is that the applicants have at least a year of experience with the NSA Police Force. Additionally, they must write an essay explaining why they want this job. Interviews are conducted with supervisors and peers to help determine the applicant's suitability for the job. If selected, the prospective handlers go off [redacted] to choose a dog, to be trained with the dog, and to prepare to live with their choice day and night. NSA builds an outdoor kennel at each handler's home and provides a specially equipped vehicle for transport. That's just the beginning! The selectee is then responsible for the feeding, vet care, and constant training and bonding with the dog to ensure that it responds to the handler and will become the best working dog possible.

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(U//FOUO) They are most definitely working dogs. Since September 11 they have had their work cut out for them, inspecting [redacted] vehicles per month. Not only NSA's incoming deliveries to include [redacted] and the [redacted] but Fort Meade's as well receive the attention of the canine inspectors. They do [redacted] not to mention sniffing [redacted] and working the [redacted] The K-9 teams have [redacted] dogs. [redacted] dogs are used for [redacted] while [redacted] sniff [redacted]

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(U//FOUO) Seeing the K-9 teams work is nothing short of amazing, and the way they perform has won the praises of many. The dogs know instinctively what to do, and when/if they find a target they [redacted] as [redacted] and in some cases, [redacted] They are able to differentiate between a [redacted] They smell every inch, sometimes twice. The commands are given [redacted] to all but [redacted] of the dogs, so technically the handlers are [redacted] The reward is a rubber ball or tennis ball, which is like a food reward, and the dogs love it--it's chewy.

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(U//FOUO) The dogs have sniffed everything from [redacted]

(U) The dogs go home with their handlers at the end of an exhausting shift to relax with their families. When it is time to retire (the dog that is), it can live a life of ease with its handler.

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(U//FOUO) This may sound like a glamorous and fun aspect of security, but it is a real and very rewarding job. These [redacted] dogs provide an invaluable service which has become more so since the beginning of the war on terror. Last year, the dogs were inspecting [redacted] vehicles per month. This year the numbers have easily doubled or tripled, and [redacted] dogs does not seem nearly enough. However, rest assured that no loaded vehicle will get past our canine friends, who work so hard for so little reward.

(U) For more information, go to the K-9 Home Page on the NSA Web at: [redacted]

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[redacted] (U//FOUO) [redacted] Center for Cryptologic History, 972-2895s, [redacted]@nsa

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