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RESERVIST DOG TRAINER REUNITED WITH MILITARY WORKING DOGS IN IRAQ

When 24 year old Chrissy Fox left the Army in March 2002, she did not expect to wear her military uniform again. However, the former Royal Army Veterinary Corps Lance Corporal was mobilised for duty in support of the war in Iraq less than a year later. She had left the Army in order to pursue a career with the civilian police, but her application has been put on hold until she completes her tour in late August.

Chrissy from Grantham, who confesses to being “a complete dog lover”, spent four years in the Army. She trained at the Defence Animal Centre in Melton Mowbray, and then completed various postings, included a six month tour of duty in Kosovo. In Kosovo, she worked with an Arms Explosives Search Dog, searching villages for illegal weapons and ammunition.

“I was just shell-shocked when my call-up papers arrived,” she admits. “I really didn’t expect this to happen at all, but you just have to get on with it.” She completed a week’s training before being sent to Aldershot where she was told, to her astonishment, that she would be deploying to Kuwait two days later.

“We arrived in Kuwait at 1am in the middle of a huge sandstorm,” recalls Chrissy. “Ten minutes after we climbed into our sleeping bags the tent blew down!” However, things picked up once she started doing the job, particularly when she was reunited with the dogs she had worked with in Kosovo. “It was lovely to see them again. It’s strange to think that the dogs have travelled as much as I have,” she laughs. Her duties have involved patrolling military establishments to deter would-be intruders, and also catching looters in the act.

Chrissy describes her patrol dog, Prince, a German Shepherd, as a dream to work with. “He loves nothing more than working. I’m so proud of him.” He copes with the extremely high temperatures by sleeping in his air-conditioned kennel, and by working only at night. “I think the dogs have more home comforts than we do,” laughs his handler.

Chrissy is grateful for the opportunity she had to take part in the events in the Gulf. “I’m so glad I did it, and can say I was there when it all happened. But now I’m looking forward to going home, and really hope that it rains!”

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

Lance Corporal Chrissy Fox returns home later this month

MORE INFORMATION FROM: Captain Gemma Hardy