

Pacific Stars & Stripes

Parapup's Tail Wags in the Sky

Friday, May 3, 1963

TACHIKAWA- AB, Japan (OI)—Jumping from airplanes is a dog's life for one member of the 7th Aerial Port Sq. combat control team here.

The jumper is Gidget, a mongrel pooch who has been a mascot with the squadron since May, 1960.

In mid-April, Gidget completed her 17th jump from a C-130 Hercules transport of the 315th Air Div., 815th "Flying Jennies" Troop Carrier Sq.



According to her handler, S/Sgt. James E. Proctor, who recently made his 200th jump, the 18-inch high, 30-pound Gidget loves to jump. When the plane nears the drop zone, Proctor hooks his static line to the anchor cable overhead and Gidget's line to himself. Then he cradles the dog in his arms and they jump from the plane together.



Sgt. James E. Proctor and A/3C Gidget, jump partners of the 315th Air Division's

Tachikawa, Japan-based Combat Control Team, jump from a C-130 Hercules of the 815th Troop Carrier Sq.

“When I bail out, my chute opens automatically,” Proctor explained. “A few seconds later I throw Gidget away from me so her static line will open her parachute,

“Then she just floats down beside me.”

Although the mongrel is not officially in the Air Force, 1st Lt. Robert A. Farmer, officer-in-charge of the Combat Control team, persuaded the 7th Aerial Port Sq. commander, Lt. Col. Ralph O. Patterson, to promote her to A/2C after her most recent jump.

“We keep a regular personnel file on Gidget, complete with promotion orders, aeronautical rating, shot records, and a physical profile,” Farmer said. “She is assigned to the quarters of S/Sgt. Stanley P. Williams, one of the Combat Control men.”



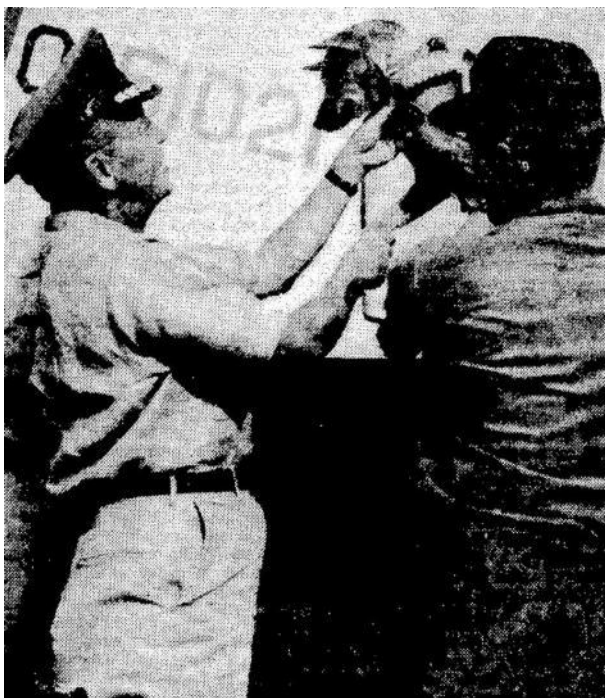
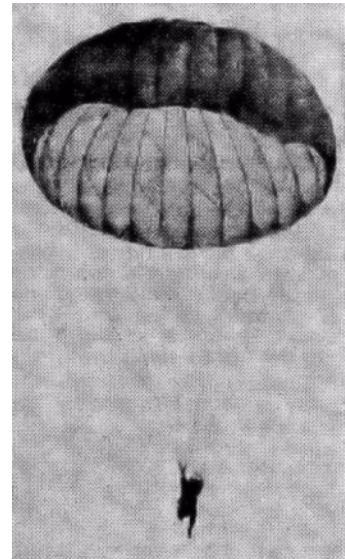
During her exciting life as a Combat Controller, Gidget got the “lucky break” many young girls dream about—and become a movie star.

Officials of the Tokyo MGM studio saw a news story about her in August, 1961, and asked permission to shoot a Movietone feature on Gidget and the Combat Control team.

Two Japanese cameramen came to Tachikawa AB to shoot the movie. One man flew in the C-130 aircraft to film the handler and dog jumping from the plane together. The second photographer reached the drop

zone ahead of schedule in a C-47 “Gooney Bird” of the 6100th Operations Sq. and photographed her in action.

Safely floating to earth in her specially rigged miniature parachute, Gidget almost looks like a human jumper.



After Gidget’s 15th drop, Brig. Gen. T. G. Kershaw, 315th Air Div. commander, presented the dog her Senior Parachute Badge.

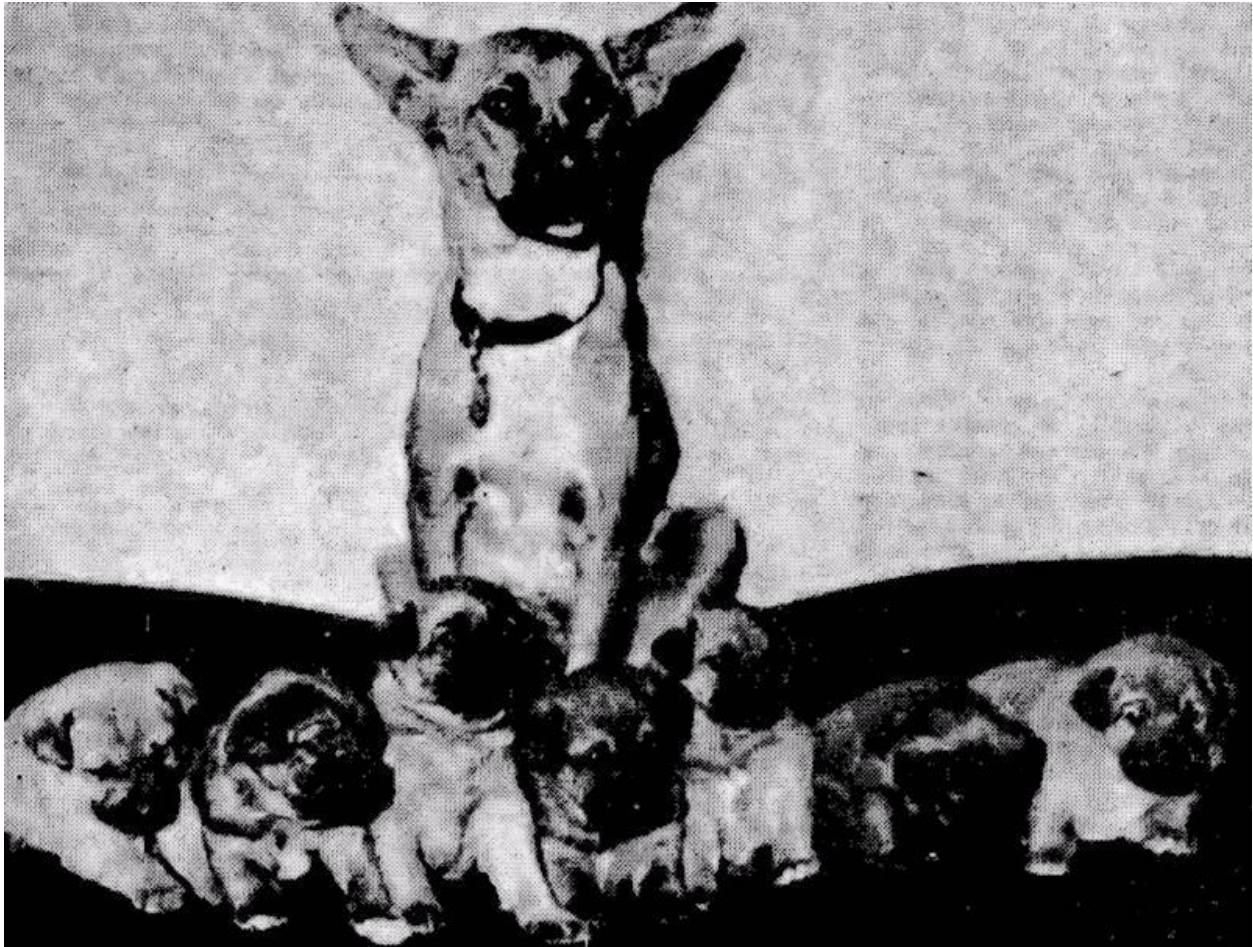
Brig. Gen. T. G. Kershaw, commander, 315th Air Div., presented a Senior Parachutist Badge to Gidget after her 15th jump. At his right is 1st Lt. Charles Corey, the former Combat Control team officer-in-charge.

“To earn this badge, a person must complete 30 jumps,” Proctor explained. “But we felt that, since a dog’s life span is normally about one-half of a man, Gidget should receive her badge after 15 jumps.”

Gidget also wears the wings of a Combat Controller. She makes her jumps at Patton Field, Camp Drew, north of Kumagaya, and the Mito Range, 80 miles northeast of Tokyo.

M/Sgt, Joe D. Willard, the Combat Control team's senior non-com, remembers when Gidget was once "passed over" for promotion.

"Our mascot lost her chance for promotion in 1961 due to DNIF, Duty Not Involving Flying, She became the mother of seven puppies. The puppies were given away later. Gidget returned to jump status and then made Airman Third Class."



DNIF (Duty Not Involving Flying) cost Gidget a promotion in February, 1961, when she became the mother of these seven puppies, However, she returned to Jump status soon afterward and was promptly "promoted" to Airman Third Class. She was recently promoted to Airman Second Class.