

FOR MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY, they have served as guards, scouts, messengers and fighters during wartime. Yet there is no national memorial to remember our country's war dogs. **YOU CAN HELP.**

THEY WERE HEROES TOO

AFTER MORE THAN A half-century of service—and despite a record of documented heroism and American lives saved—one group of U.S. veterans has been accorded no honor in our nation's capital.

Thousands of dogs who served with the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard have been denied a monument in Washington, D.C. Last year, their fellow veterans sought permission to commemorate their service with a single tree at Arlington National Cemetery. That request was denied.

Most Americans know nothing of the record of their war dogs—to say nothing of the final chapter of their saga, which some consider a stain on the honor of the U.S. armed forces.

LIKE SO MANY GREAT American stories, the history of our war dogs began with a small act of rebellion. In World War I, the British, Belgian, Italian and French armies trained thousands of dogs as sentries and messengers or to find and comfort wounded men on the battlefield. On the other side, the Germans deployed 7000 dogs, with thousands more in reserve. (The famous Rin Tin Tin was a German dog found in a trench after an attack.) But the U.S. Army had no such program.

Nevertheless, a small, stray bull terrier named Stubby was adopted by the



Courtesy of Charlie Cargo

VIETNAM: Army Spec. 4 Charlie Cargo and Wolf. The dog once saved Cargo's life by biting him before he could set off a booby trap. "I learned never to second-guess Wolf," says Cargo, who still has a bite scar on his hand.

shrapnel but recovered to join the 102nd in battles at Chateau Thierry, the Marne and the Meuse-Argonne. The men of the 102nd hung a Victory Medal from his collar. French women fashioned a blanket for "The Hero Dog" to wear, and with each offensive, more medals were pinned to Stubby's cloak.

After 17 battles, Stubby sailed back

to America, where his victorious commander, Gen. John "Black Jack" Pershing, awarded the dog a special gold medal. As a life member of both the American Legion and the Red Cross, Stubby marched in parades across the country and met Presidents Wilson, Harding and Coolidge. When old age felled the warrior in 1926, his body was preserved and displayed for 30 years at the Red Cross Museum in Washington, D.C. But time wore away at his skin, his

102nd Infantry and smuggled aboard a troop ship to France. There, he would prove his mettle.

Stubby carried messages under fire, sought out the wounded and stayed with them until help arrived. One night in

February 1918, he roused a sleeping sergeant to warn of a gas attack, giving soldiers time to don masks. On sentry duty, he clamped his teeth into a German infiltrator, who was then captured. In no-man's-land he was wounded by

fur and the memory of his countrymen: Stubby moldered thereafter in a packing crate in a Smithsonian storeroom. Still, his legacy endured in the thousands of lives saved by dogs in subsequent American wars.

HELP HONOR K-9 VALOR

The Vietnam Dog Handler Association, a veterans group, is spearheading the drive to honor America's war dogs with a national memorial. To learn more or to make a donation, swipe the cue below or visit www.vdhaonline.org on the Web; you can also write to the National War Dog Memorial Fund, c/o Vietnam Dog Handler Association, P.O. Box 5658, Dept. P, Oceanside, Calif. 92052-5658.



BY RICHARD BEN CRAMER

America's Best Friends During Times Of War

Although their exploits are largely unknown, tens of thousands of dogs have served this country faithfully since World War I. Here's a brief look at three canine heroes.

Betmann/Corbis



STUBBY

The original war dog: The 102nd Infantry's Stubby was in 17 battles during World War I, saving U.S. lives, capturing Germans and comforting the wounded.

National Archives



CHIPS

The call of duty: Army dog Chips attacked a pillbox on Sicily in 1943, taking four prisoners. He earned a Silver Star and a Purple Heart, both later revoked.

Animal Image



NEMO

Vietnam hero: Despite losing an eye to gunfire, Nemo, an Air Force sentry, threw himself on four Viet Cong to save his handler in 1966. Both survived.

WITHIN A MONTH after the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, America's canine trainers had established DFD—Dogs for Defense—and soon began to work with the Coast Guard (saboteurs were expected to surface from submarines at any moment). By April 1942, dogs were serving as sentries at Army depots and defense plants. That summer, Secretary of War Henry Stimson directed all branches of the service to explore the use of dogs, and the rush was on—for dogs to work as guards, medics, MPs, mine-sniffers, scouts, messengers, even tactical fighters; for dogs to walk patrol in Pacific jungles and mush supplies across Arctic ice. One year after America went to war, the military announced that the Army, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard would need about 125,000 dogs.

Canine combatants were recruited just as men were. But no draft was required. Tens of thousands of dogs were shipped voluntarily to DFD centers, where they were measured, evaluated, examined and trained for duty. A few owners may have fobbed off bad pets, but most were patriots who sent a dog off to war just as they would a son. (That spirit posed an unexpected problem. Mail poured in,



The military recognized the dogs' "unbroken record of faithful and gallant performance."

WORLD WAR II: Andy, a Doberman pinscher (pictured with an unidentified Marine), saved a tank platoon pinned down on the island of Bougainville by flushing Japanese machine-gunners from their nest.

asking for news of K-9 recruits—or bearing cards, biscuits or bones.)

The only news the owners could get came from handlers in the field and occasionally in newspaper stories. One such story concerned Chips, a mixed-breed donated from Pleasantville, N.Y., and shipped overseas with the 30th Infantry. With his handler, Pvt. John P. Rowell, Chips took part in the July 1943 invasion of Sicily. Near Licata, on the island's southern coast, Rowell and Chips worked inland in the light before dawn.

About 300 yards from the beach, a machine gun disguised with thatch opened fire on Rowell. Chips broke free and streaked for the gunners' pillbox. Soon, an Italian soldier emerged, with Chips biting at his arms and throat. Three more Italian soldiers followed with hands up. Chips suffered a scalp wound and powder burns—proof that the Italians had tried to kill him—but the dog prevailed. After being treated and returned to duty that same night, Chips discovered 10 Italian soldiers

approaching on a road. Rowell and his comrades took them all as prisoners—and Chips became a hero.

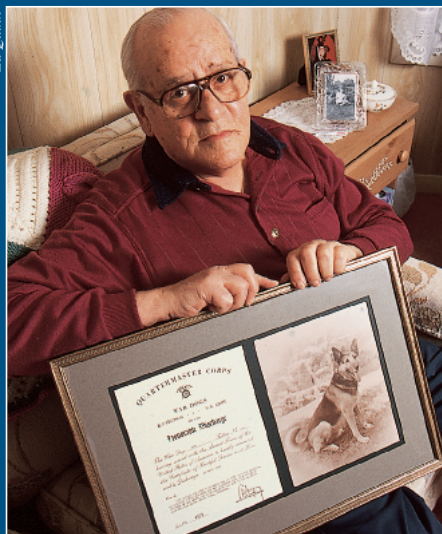
Chips was awarded the Silver Star for valor and a Purple Heart for his wounds. U.S. papers exulted: *Yank Hero Dog Takes 14 Italos!* Then the trouble began. The commander of the Order of the Purple Heart complained to President Roosevelt that bestowing the medal on a dog demeaned all the *men* who had received Purple Hearts. Both of Chips' medals were revoked, and no U.S. war dog would ever again win official decoration.

The only recognition Chips could keep, when he was returned to the States and his owner, was his honorable discharge. Still, that was better than dogs in later wars. When the Pentagon learned how much trouble it took to retrain a dog for civilian life, there would be no more discharges. After 1946, any dog who "enlisted" was a war dog for life.

BY THE TIME American soldiers scrambled to save South Korea in 1950, the World Wars' canine lessons had been forgotten. The entire U.S. military had only one platoon of true war dogs—the Army's 26th Scout Dog Platoon, which

continued

Ed Quinn



LEN AND RIN: A BOY AND HIS DOG GO TO WAR

LEN BRESCIA with a photo of his dog, Rin, and Rin's Army discharge certificate. Brescia, himself a Navy veteran of World War II, volunteered his dog for service shortly after Japan's December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.

A FEW MONTHS AFTER PEARL HARBOR, Len Brescia of Watertown, Mass., heard that the armed forces needed dogs. Len, 17, was certain his friendly pup, a German shepherd mutt named Rin, could make the grade as a guard dog. "So I got in touch, and they sent a gentleman out to our house, and he asked me to bring Rin out on a leash." Then he pulled out a starter's pistol and fired a shot in the air. "Rin turned on him right away—and if I hadn't had that leash, he would have gone for the guy who made that noise. And, of course, that's exactly what they wanted to see."

Rin "enlisted" in 1942. Len wasn't far behind—by 1943 he'd joined the Navy. (Later,

Len learned that if they'd enlisted together, he and his dog might have served together.) Both were remembered in their hometown—Len with a red, white and blue star in his folks' window, Rin with a red, white and blue paw print.

Len did his duty in the Pacific, winding up in a motor pool on Okinawa. Rin did his service with the Army—no one would say where. And both made it through to the war's end. In fact, Rin lived into the 1950s with Brescia's family in Watertown. Even in old age, Rin still served—as baby-sitter. "We'd sit the baby in the carriage out in the sun, and Rin would sit or lie down next to it. No one was getting near that carriage."

THEY WERE HEROES TOO/continued

shipped out in June 1951 and compiled a record of distinction. The fear the animals created among Chinese and North Korean troops was evidenced by the propaganda they blared through loudspeakers at night: "Yankee! Take your dog and go home!"

The war dogs and their handlers spent almost two years in Korea, patrolling at night, when no other unit could match their success. As cease-fire negotiations began, the Army recognized that the dogs' "unbroken record of faithful and gallant performance...saved countless casualties." Still, by the time the last dog came home from Korea, nuclear war was the big threat. The last training center, at Fort Carson, Colo., was shut down in 1957, and the Army abandoned war dogs.

Vietnam changed all that. As the war escalated in the 1960s, first the Air Force and then the Army employed hundreds of canine sentries to guard against Viet Cong infiltration. Marine and Army scout dogs led patrols through jungles, rice paddies and piedmont hills. Once American troops discovered that they seldom lost a man while a dog walked along, there were never enough of the animals. Eventually, 4000 war dogs would serve and protect our troops.

"When we were sick, they would comfort us, and when we were injured, they protected us," said a former Vietnam dog handler, Tom Mitchell of San Diego. "They didn't care how much money we had or what color our skin was. Heck, they didn't even care if we were good soldiers. They loved us unconditionally. And we loved them. Still do."

Stories of the bond between human and canine soldiers are told on Web sites devoted to the war dogs. Along with the animals' heroics, the sites have another theme in common: outrage at the fate of those dogs who laid down their lives for American troops.

When the U.S. pulled out of Vietnam, the Pentagon considered dogs "war equipment"—and ordered them "abandoned in place." As Michael Lemish, official historian for the Vietnam Dog Handler Association (VDHA), notes: "Officially, no one knows what happened to

AP/Wide World



them—the only questions that really remain are how many were killed, eaten or just simply starved to death."

THE SHAME OF THAT CHAPTER in the war dogs' history fuels the drive for recognition—a drive that


"They didn't care how much money we had or what the color of our skin was. They loved us unconditionally."

ANOTHER SCOUT DOG named Wolf—one of about 4000 canines who served with U.S. forces in Vietnam—leads his handler through a rice paddy near Saigon in 1968.

is picking up steam. In 1999, a documentary about war dogs aired on the Discovery Channel. The first unofficial U.S. memorial was a sculpture unveiled last February at March Field Air Museum in Riverside, Calif. An identical sculpture—man and dog on patrol—was dedicated

in October at Georgia's Fort Benning Infantry Museum. And a new photo book about war dogs is being produced by Open Books of Annapolis, Md.

But as yet there is no memorial that will serve for the nation, as the war dogs did.

Veteran dog handlers collected 100,000 signatures but were turned down for a postage stamp. (Bugs Bunny made it—the war dogs did not.) The Smithsonian is now renovating the National Museum of American History, but there are no plans to mention war dogs in the new Armed Forces History Hall. (They even sent Stubby packing to a National Guard armory in Connecticut.) And when the veteran dog handlers applied to plant a tree at Arlington National Cemetery, they were denied. Says John Burnam, the president of the VDHA: "We wanted it to be a team memorial—for the war dogs and the men who served with them. But they just won't do it. The bias is simply 'Humans Only.' They didn't want to let us inside the gate or anywhere near it." 

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Richard Ben Cramer is the author of the best-selling biography "Joe DiMaggio: The Hero's Life" (Simon & Schuster).

Legal Notice

ATTENTION RCA, GE OR PROSCAN TELEVISION SET USERS

If You Are A U.S. Citizen or Resident and You Purchased or Otherwise Acquired an RCA, GE or PROSCAN Television Set Manufactured Between November 1, 1992 and January 31, 1996 With One of the Following Chassis: CTC 175; CTC 176; CTC 177; CTC 178; CTC 179; CTC 184; CTC 185; CTC 186; CTC 187; CTC 188 or CTC 189

PLEASE READ THIS LEGAL NOTICE

The purpose of this notice is to inform you of a proposed settlement of a class action, *Scott Baird, et al. v. Thomson Consumer Electronics, Inc.*, Case No. 00-L-000761, as explained in detail in a Notice of Class Action Settlement, which you are encouraged to obtain and read in its entirety. The goal of the Settlement is to provide relief to those persons who purchased RCA, GE or PROSCAN televisions that might have been affected by a Tuner on Board Problem. The "Tuner On Board" (or tuner shield) is the metal cover surrounding the television's tuner and is attached to the television's printed circuit board (which contains certain circuitry for the television set). Plaintiffs allege that these performance problems result from the difference in the coefficient of thermal expansion between the materials used in the tuner shield and the materials used in the printed circuit board. In more general terms, the different rates of expansion in these materials occasionally cause RCA, GE or PROSCAN Televisions to have certain significant and prolonged video or audio performance problems. If you purchased or otherwise acquired an RCA, GE or PROSCAN Television Set with the chassis numbers identified above, you may be a member of the Class and your rights will be affected by legal proceedings in this action.

A "Settlement Hearing" will be held at the Circuit Court of Madison County, Illinois on June 15, 2001 at 9:30 a.m. to determine: (1) whether the proposed Settlement of this action is fair, reasonable and adequate; (2) whether a final judgment should be entered dismissing the litigation on the merits as to Thomson Consumer Electronics, Inc., n/k/a Thomson Multimedia Inc. ("TCE"), the manufacturer of the television sets, with prejudice to Plaintiffs and all members

of the Settlement Class who do not timely request exclusion; and (3) whether applications to be made by Class Counsel for payment of fees and reimbursement of expenses and an incentive fee award to Plaintiffs should be approved by the Court.

Under the Settlement Agreement, TCE will provide eligible Settlement Class Members who timely submit a Claim Form with either cash reimbursement of repair costs up to an aggregate of \$100 million, a \$50 Rebate Certificate or a \$25 Rebate Certificate as detailed in the Notice of Class Action Settlement. If you purchased your television from Sears or Heilig-Meyers (and therefore without a TCE warranty), then you may be eligible for a \$25 Rebate Certificate only.

If you previously agreed to settle your claims against TCE, you are not eligible to receive settlement relief.

You have a right to object to or be excluded from the Class as detailed in the Notice of Proposed Class Settlement. If you wish to do so you must do so in writing by May 20, 2001, as detailed in the Notice of Proposed Class Settlement.

If you properly request exclusion, the terms of the settlement will not be binding as to you. If you do not request exclusion from the Class and the settlement becomes effective, you will be bound by the terms of the settlement.

If you choose to remain in the Settlement Class and participate in the benefits of the proposed settlement if it is finally approved, you must complete a Claim Form and return it with the supporting documentation no later than, May 20, 2001, to the Claims Administrator, TOB Claims Center, P.O. Box 1261, Minneapolis, MN 55440-1261.

Questions about this settlement should be directed to Class Counsel: Lee S. Shalov, Shalov Stone & Bonner, 276 Fifth Avenue, Suite 704, New York, New York 10001 (www.lawssb.com); and Andrew N. Friedman and Gary E. Mason, Cohen, Milstein, Hausfeld & Toll, P.L.L.C., 1100 New York Avenue, N.W., Suite 500, West Tower, Washington, D.C. 20005 (www.cmht.com).

This is a summary notice only. To obtain the Notice of Class Action Settlement & Claim Form, Call: 1-877-491-9339

or Visit: www.tobsettlement.com

PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT THE COURT.

Dated: January 23, 2001. By Order of the Circuit Court of Madison County, Illinois.