

LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

Military working dog to be honored in D.C.

By Reyes Mata III rmata@lcsun-news.com

Posted: 11/07/2011 10:57:40 PM MST

LAS CRUCES - A canine Las Cruces war veteran and border crime fighter will be featured on national television as part of a Washington, D.C., Veterans Day service.

Bino - a trained Dutch shepherd military working dog that served with the U.S. Army in Tikrit and Mosul, Iraq - earned a 2011 American Humane Association Hero Dog Awards for his military service and continuing contributions to American society.

"For thousands of years dogs have protected us and given us comfort. It's time to repay the favor," said Mark Stubis, chief communications officer with the American Humane Association, the agency behind the first-ever national hero dog awards. "It's time for them to get the recognition they deserve," said Stubis.

Two other dogs received 2011 "hero awards" from the agency: Roselle, a guide dog that saved its owner by leading him down 78 flights of stairs in the World Trade Center following the Sept. 11 attacks, and Sage, a search-and-rescue dog that served in Iraq and at the Pentagon during the 9/11 attack aftermath.

Bino, 13, and the other two award recipients were recognized Monday at the federal House Committee on Veterans Affairs with veterans, media, elected officials, celebrities and philanthropists as part of the 2011 American Humane Association Hero Dog Awards ceremony. That ceremony will be aired Friday, Veterans Day at 6 p.m. on the Hallmark Channel, Comcast Cable channel 58.

The host will be Carson Kressley, along with Betty White, Peter Fonda, Paula Abdul, Faith Ford and Olivia Munn.

Bino - whose full name is MWD (military working dog) Bino C152 - served in the 35th MP detachment at Fort Gordon in narcotics detention and patrol for 11 years. Bino also served in Iraq for 14 months, and was a drug detention tool with U.S. Border Patrol special missions.

Now with adoptive owner Debbie Kandoll of Las Cruces - the founder of Military Working Dog Adoptions - Bino is continuing his service to veterans by helping with their therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

"Bino is now a post-traumatic stress disorder demo dog. The healing takes place in the bond with the master," Kandoll said.

Bino, well-schooled in helping guide and comfort people with distressed emotions, is applying those skills by helping to train the service animals of PTSD veterans.

"Bino may not be on the battlefield any longer, but even in retirement at 13 years old, he is still actively and enthusiastically engaged in saving fellow soldier lives, just in a different way," stated the herodogawards.org website.

"I could not imagine myself without a military dog. Their level of love and devotion is beyond anything you can describe," said Kandoll, who adopted Bino in March 2010 from Fort Gordon, Ga.

Reyes Mata III can be reached at (575)541-5405