

On the Positive Side: Dogs with a positive place in history

By J. Linder / For the Sun-News

Posted: 09/21/2012 02:34:04 AM MDT

It will surprise many people to learn that the most decorated war dog of World War I and the first dog ever to be promoted to sergeant through combat was a pit bull type dog named Sergeant Stubby. Stubby was a stray found on Yale Field in Connecticut and was adopted by Cpl. Robert Conroy. When it came time to be deployed, the dog's owner smuggled him on board the ship and rumor has it that Stubby was allowed to stay when he showed the commander that he could salute. Stubby served 18 months in the 102nd Infantry in the trenches in France, where he spent a month under constant fire. He participated in 17 battles, learned to warn his troops of incoming gas attacks, located wounded soldiers and is even credited with capturing a spy.

When he returned to the U.S., Stubby became a celebrity. He marched and led several parades, met the president, became the Georgetown Hoyas' team mascot, received a medal for serving his country and has a brick in his name at the World War II memorial. In 1926, Stubby died in his owner's arms. His remains are on display at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. featured in The Price of Freedom: Americans at War exhibit.

Another famous war dog is Sallie, who served in the American Civil War. Sallie was a Staffordshire Bull Terrier and was part of the 11th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. Sallie stood guard over dead and wounded Union soldiers and was present at the Battle of Gettysburg. Unfortunately Sallie was killed by a bullet at the battle of Hatcher's Run. There is a statue of her in Gettysburg, Pa. where she is lying in front of the monument that honors her infantry.

On Saturday, Oct. 6, at Pioneer Park from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. there will be a festival to promote the positive, loving nature of all dogs, especially today's misunderstood breeds. Dog lovers of all kinds are invited to attend. Bring the family, even the four-legged members and help create more positive stories that might one day go down in the history books. For more information on the event please visit: www.actionprogramsforanimals.org or call (575) 644-0505.

More information on famous dogs and to view vintage pictures please visit:

www.cesarsway.com or www.badrap.org

Guest author J. Linder is a member of the rescue community. Interested guest authors can contact the Humane Society of Southern New Mexico at (575) 523-8020.