

AMERICA'S
Animal
Soldiers

War Dogs



by Meish Goldish

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Consultant: Ron Aiello

President of the United States War Dogs Association

Marine Scout Dog Handler

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Three Heroes

One night in February 2010, more than 50 American soldiers were asleep inside a **military base** in Afghanistan. Unknown to the soldiers, a **suicide bomber** was quietly approaching the building where the soldiers slept. Wearing 25 pounds (11 kg) of **explosives**, he tried to sneak inside. Luckily, the enemy did not go unnoticed. Three dogs on the base spotted the bomber. First Sasha began to bark loudly. Then Target and Rufus jumped on the enemy and bit him.



Rufus (left) and Target (right)

Unable to enter the building, the bomber set off his explosives by the door. The powerful blast injured five American soldiers—but all of them recovered from their wounds. The three brave dogs were praised as heroes. They had stopped an attack that could have killed many soldiers.




Sergeant Christopher Duke, one of the soldiers saved by the three dogs, was reunited with Rufus back in the United States.

The blast from the bomb wounded Sasha, Target, and Rufus. Unfortunately, Sasha was hurt so badly that she was unable to recover and had to be put to sleep. Target and Rufus survived their injuries.

A Proud Past

Dogs like Sasha, Target, and Rufus have aided the U.S. **military** for more than 150 years. In the **Civil War** (1861–1865) and World War I (1914–1918), some soldiers brought their own dogs with them. Many of the **canines** served merely as **companions**. Others were used to deliver messages on the battlefield or to guard troops.

A historical photograph showing several World War I soldiers in brown uniforms and gas masks. They are holding rifles. In the foreground, a dog is also wearing a gas mask and a medical pack with a red cross on its back. The scene is set outdoors under a clear blue sky.

Like soldiers, war dogs sometimes wear masks to protect them from breathing poisonous gas.

Dogs that serve in the U.S. **Armed Forces** are officially known as military working dogs, or MWDs.

The United States officially began to use war dogs in World War II (1939–1945). At first the animals only **patrolled** American coastlines to warn of possible enemy attacks. Later, war dogs were sent overseas. They guarded soldiers, **weapons**, **vehicles**, and buildings. They also were trained to attack enemy fighters on **command**.



During the Vietnam War (1957–1975), dogs used their sharp senses of smell and hearing to find enemies hiding in the thick jungle.

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Learn More Online

To learn more about war dogs, visit
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About the Author

Meish Goldish has written more than 200 books for children. His book *Heart-Stopping Roller Coasters* was a Children's Choices Selection in 2011. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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War Dogs

One night in February 2010, more than 50 American soldiers were asleep inside a military base in Afghanistan. Unknown to the soldiers, a suicide bomber was quietly approaching the building. Luckily, the enemy did not go unnoticed. Three dogs on the base spotted the bomber. First Sasha began to bark loudly. Then Target and Rufus jumped on the enemy and bit him, making it impossible for the bomber to set off his explosives inside the building. The brave canines had stopped an attack that could have killed many soldiers.

Look inside to learn more about Sasha, Target, and Rufus, as well as other dogs that help keep American soldiers safe. From sniffing out bombs to guarding troops, these heroic animals help out in ways that no humans ever could.

**Dolphins
in the Navy**

**Sea Lions
in the Navy**

**Horses, Donkeys,
and Mules in the Marines**

War Dogs



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