

GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR - GABE



In 2012, the American Humane Association awarded the Hero Dog Award to military working dog, Gabe. For thirteen months, Gabe served beside his handler Charles Shuck in 210 combat missions in Mosul, Iraq. This war dog hero came from humble beginnings. As a young pup, the yellow Labrador retriever ran through the streets of Houston, Texas. One day, the dog warden captured the stray and sent him to a 'kill shelter.' Luckily, The Southeast Texas Labrador retriever Association recommended that the homeless

Labrador should be sent to the Specialized Search Dog Program at Lackland Air Force Base

At first, Gabe was a dismal failure at the Military Working Dog School. Sgt. 1st Class Charles Shuck said. "He just didn't want to search, didn't want to find stuff." Shuck fell in love with the goofy three-year old Lab, and patiently worked with him for five months. Right before the final trials of the SSD program, Shuck braced himself for the possibility of deployment without his favorite dog by his side. But the mellow yellow retriever did not let his soldier down. Shuck recalls, "Gabe actually performed like a rock star and Doki (the other dog) was scared of the dark." Gabe had the serial number K153 tattooed in his left ear, and in August of 2006, he boarded a plane alongside Sgt. Shuck and the rest of the soldiers of the 178th Military Police Detachment.



In Iraq, the pair were together 24 hours a day, and made 26 discoveries of explosives or weapons, more 'finds' than any other search dog in Iraq that year. And no matter what kind of bad day Shuck was having, Gabe was always by his side, making him feel better. Soon Shuck started taking Gabe to visit other units and soldiers who were having a hard time. Soon, Gabe's therapy dog role became nearly as important as his bomb detection job. "Gabe was a piece of home to the soldiers," Shuck said. "They'd left their families behind. They'd left their dogs behind. For them to just put their face's in Gabe's fur for a few seconds—it would get them back to where they needed to be."

In 2008, the American Kennel Club awarded Gabe the Heroic Military Working Dog Medal, an award that included animals from all of the armed forces. Gabe also earned three Army Commendation Medals, an Army Achievement Medal, and 40 Coins of Excellence. Gabe retired in 2009 after a very distinguished career. After his retirement, Gabe and his favorite soldier visited schools to teach and inspire children about the importance of working hard and staying in school. Gabe had proudly represented the U.S. Military Police until his passing on February 13, 2013.

By Nancy Roe Pimm

Nancy Roe Pimm is an award-winning author of nonfiction narratives for young readers. She is a Choose to Read Ohio author and her books have been chosen as Junior Library Selections. Pimm's newest title, *Bonded by Battle: The Powerful Friendships of Military Dogs and Soldiers from the Civil War to Operation Iraqi Freedom* explores the unbreakable bonds formed by military dogs and soldiers as they face life and death in the war zone. These heroic, intelligent four-legged soldiers are always full of courage and a whole lot of heart. Open the pages of this book to meet a bunch of unforgettable canine commandos.

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