

LEGENDARY WAR DOGS TO BE HONORED AT MOUNT OLIVE CEREMONY

By PHIL GARBER Managing Editor

3:29 p.m. May 26, 2016 edited



MOUNT OLIVE TWP. – A War Dog Memorial at the All Veterans Memorial at Turkey Brook Park will be unveiled as part of the Memorial Day ceremonies on Monday, May 30. Smoky, a 4.5 pound Yorkshire terrier is among five brave pooches to be memorialized and her handler William “Bill” Wynne, decorated WWII veteran, dog trainer, author, and photo-journalist will be the keynote speaker for the dedication. This will be Smoky’s ninth war dog memorial in the U.S. in addition to three in Australia.

William “Bill” A. Wynne, now 94, served for two years in New Guinea, Biak Island, Luzon, Okinawa and Korea with the 26th Photo Recon Squadron and the 6th Photo Recon Group. As aerial photographer, he flew 13 combat missions with the 3rd Emergency Rescue Squadron from Biak Island to Ceram, Halmahera, Celebes, Borneo, and Mindanao between September and December 1944. who served in the jungles of New Guinea during World War II. It was there that Wynne bought Smoky from another GI for \$6, the start of a relationship that would last for the war and many years later.

Smoky Found

The story about Smoky begins “miles from nowhere” on a March day of 1944 in New Guinea. Sgt. Ed Downey was driving his jeep when he heard yelping from the side of the road. Getting out to investigate, he found a four-pound Yorkshire terrier in an abandoned fox hole.

Downey put the dog on the seat of his Jeep and continued to the base camp. Downey was no dog lover so he gave the pooch to a Sgt. Dare who crafted a collar out of parachute string and tied Smoky to a huge truck tire.

Wynne said he saw the small dog and offered to buy it from Sgt. Dare. The deal was set. Wynne paid the equivalent of \$6.44 for the scrawny dog. “She was about as big as my GI shoe,” Wynne said. “She had a few good meals under her belt and she was a lot better.”

Wynne had gone to dog obedience school in Cleveland before he was drafted. He used his experience to begin training Smoky, for five minute periods up to 30 times a day. Wynne said he had plenty of free time. “I was in the jungle of New Guinea with nothing to do but write letters to home, go to a show we’d seen 25 times already or play cards,” Wynne said.



Smoky got her first taste of fame after Wynne learned of a contest by in 1944 by “Yank Down Under” magazine to find the champion mascot in the southwest Pacific area. Wynne wanted to come up with a novel photo for the contest and he made a small parachute for Smoky with a harness made of money belts. He hoisted the dog up to the top of a tree and let her go as she fell gently to the ground while a friend snapped photos. It would prove enough to win the title of champion mascot from more than 400 entries.

Throughout her service, Smoky slept in Wynne’s tent on a blanket made from a green felt card table cover; she shared Wynne’s C-rations and an occasional can of Spam.

Wynne said Smoky went along on 12 air/sea rescue and photo reconnaissance missions. On those flights, Smoky spent long hours dangling in a soldier’s pack near machine guns used to ward off enemy fighters. Smoky was credited with twelve combat missions and awarded eight battle stars. Smoky and her brave handler and friend Bill survived 150 air raids on New Guinea and made it through a typhoon at Okinawa.



Wynne continued to teach Smoky more than 200 tricks, until July 1944 when he was laid up in a hospital ward with dengue fever. Nurses at the ward had seen the “Yank Down Under” story and asked if they could take Smoky for regular rounds of patients. The doctor in charge at the time, Dr. Charles Mayo, of the famed Mayo Clinic, approved and Smoky became the first therapy dog on record.

Smoky's famous mission



Though Smoky went with Wynne on several reconnaissance missions, it was one particular mission when the dog helped get the communications operational at an airbase at Lingayen Gulf, Luzon during a series of bombings that made her famous. At a time when communications were critical, Wynne had called upon his trusted canine friend to drag a telegraph wire through the 70-foot-long culvert that ran under an aircraft runway. Wynne tied the wire to Smokey's collar and ordered her through the 8 inch high culvert. Though it took a couple of tries; Smokey did what was asked of her with tremendous success. This particular scene has been recreated at the All Veterans Memorial War Dog Memorial.

Smoky almost had a premature demise on the Philippine island of Luzon. A strange disease was killing livestock along with dogs. Wynne kept Smoky and Duke safe and they survived.

After the war, Wynne smuggled Smoky home in an oxygen tank mask. “I smuggled her everywhere,” Wynne said.

After the war, Wynne returned home and married Margie, who he had met shortly before he was drafted. In subsequent years, Wynne had a career as a columnist with the Cleveland Plain Dealer while bringing Smoky to fairs and TV shows across the country.

Wynne wrote about Smoky in his book, “Smoky, the Yorkie Doodle Dandy, and the Dogs of All Wars.” Wynne's wife died in 2004 and he lives alone in Cleveland with his two Yorkies and a cat. More than 21,000 copies of his book have been sold and a movie is planned based on the book.

Also expected to attend the Memorial Day program is; several New Jersey Gold Star Mothers, David Frei, the former spokesman for the Westminster Kennel Club, the 102nd Calvary, and Ron Aiello, President of the U.S. War Dog Association.

The Memorial Day program is scheduled for Monday, May 30, at the All Veterans Memorial at Turkey Brook Park.

The formal dedication of the new War Dog Memorial is scheduled for 10:30 a.m.; a formal memorial service will begin at 11:20 a.m.; with a keynote by William “Bill” A. Wynne.