

Valuable Service



photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Todd Frantom, courtesy U.S. Navy

Nov. 11 is Veterans Day, when we honor those who have served our country in the military.

Did you know that dogs work with our troops to help save lives? Military working dogs help keep our servicepeople safe and perform specific jobs.

This week, The Mini Page finds out more about these loyal dogs serving our troops.

Dogs of war

Military forces have used dogs in wars for thousands of years. Ancient Greeks and Romans put collars with razor-sharp spikes on attack dogs and sent them to battle enemy soldiers.

In the American Revolutionary War, dogs helped carry supplies for U.S. troops.

During World War I, German and French armies used about 50,000 trained dogs as **sentries**, or guards, scouts and carriers of ammunition and messages.

Later, during World War II, the U.S. Army formed the Army Canine (K-9) Corps. The unit began with nine dogs trained by a civilian group, Dogs for Defense Inc.

By the end of the war, the K-9 Corps had a force of more than 10,000 dogs. They were used as sentries, scouts, messengers and to find mines and booby traps.



A scout dog leads a patrol during the Vietnam War.

Saving lives

Handlers say military working dogs save lives every single day. Dogs not only detect explosive materials and drugs, but they also can tell if someone is acting suspiciously. If their team is under attack, dogs will protect their people.

The most common military working dogs are German shepherds and Belgian Malinois (mal-un-WAH). They have the best combination of strong senses of smell and hearing, strength, courage, intelligence and the ability to adapt to different climates.

Other breeds, such as golden retrievers and Labrador retrievers, are excellent search dogs.

Protecting dogs

Missions can be hard on military working dogs. They might walk four to five miles in the hot desert and then still have to search an area and protect a team member.

They wear booties to protect them from glass, sand, heat and rugged land.

They also wear bulletproof vests that weigh about 15 pounds.



Scott, a Belgian Malinois military working dog, wears protective gear: goggles, booties and a bulletproof vest.

Caring for canines

Military working dogs have to stay fit. The long flights to their base, the amount of weight they have to carry, and the long hours of work make for a physically demanding job.

Training military dogs

The Department of Defense has a military working dog breeding program at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in Texas. The program is responsible for training between 50 and 90 puppies each year.

Until they're about 6 months old, puppies are raised by a foster family. They then return to the base to begin training.




This puppy is ready to enter the military working dog program at Lackland Air Force Base.

Time for retirement

Dogs may work for anywhere from four to 13 years before retirement. In 2000, President Bill Clinton signed a bill setting up a retirement program for military working dogs.

Today, when a military dog is too old to work or has been injured, every effort is made to find it a good home. Some retired military dogs go to work for police or fire departments. Former handlers have the first chance to adopt their dog partners.

Resources



On the Web:

- [bit.ly /MPwardogs](https://bit.ly/MPwardogs)

At the library:


- “Whitey’s Journey: A Four-legged Soldier in the Second World War” by Kelsey Lonie

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of military working dogs are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

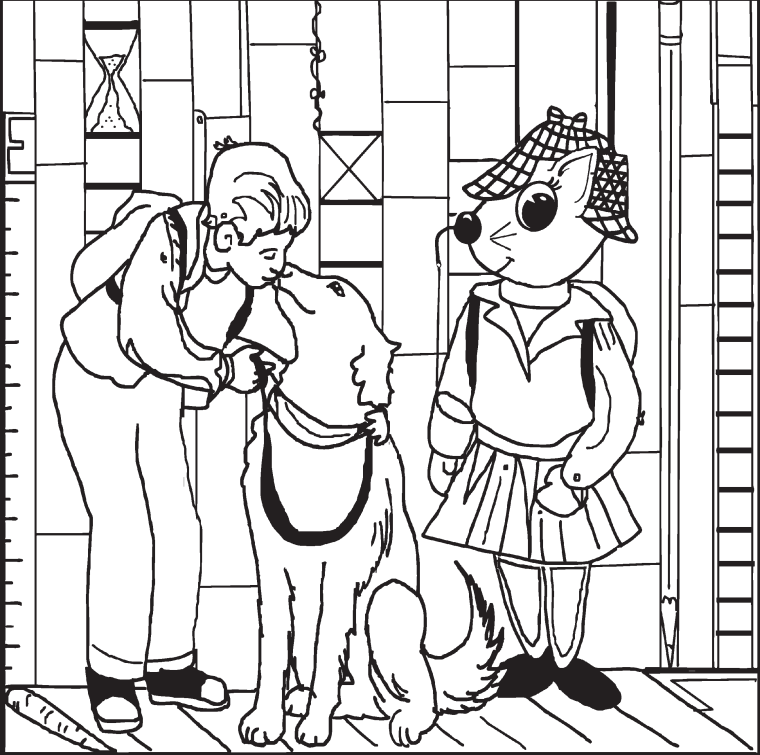
BOOTIES, BREEDING, CANINE, DETECT, DOG, DUTY, HANDLER, HONOR, MALINOIS, MESSAGES, MILITARY, PROTECT, RETIRE, SCOUTS, SENTRIES, SHEPHERD, VEST, VETERAN, WORKING.

V E T E R A N B R E E D I N G
V E S T O M W G W T V F D C B
B M E S B I P D H O H C O X S
O A G E E L S R R D R O G H K
O L A N R I E T O E E K N W M
T I S T I T Y N U T H T I O W
I N S R T A T F I O E P E N R
E O E I E R U S Q N C C E C G
S I M E R Y D R C D A S T H T
T S N S R E L D N A H C E T S



Mini Spy Classics

Mini Spy is helping a friend train a dog for the military. See if you can find the hidden pictures. Then color the picture.



Based on materials originally produced and/or created by Betty Debnam.


- hourglass
- letter E
- ruler
- cleaver

- letter H
- whale
- word MINI
- banana

- two birds
- number 7
- letter B
- pencil

- ladder
- cherry
- flyswatter
- marshmallow


Mini Jokes



Daniel: Why are dogs terrible dancers?

Darla: Because they have two left feet!

Eco Note



Scientists have found a massive freshwater aquifer beneath the Atlantic Ocean off the northeastern U.S. coast, raising hopes for easing global water shortages. The International Ocean Drilling Program drilled off Cape Cod and extracted 13,200 gallons of water, some of drinking quality, suggesting the supply could rival major aquifers on land. Researchers believe such “secret fresh water” deposits may exist off coasts worldwide, from South Africa to Indonesia. But questions remain about the water’s age, renewability, ownership and ecological risks if tapped.

adapted with permission from Earthweek.com

For later: Look in your newspaper for items about Veterans Day events in your area.

Teachers: Follow and interact with The Mini Page on Facebook!




KidSpot

By Dan Thompson

11-1

How many sets of numbers can you combine to get a total of 100? Example: 88 + 12 = 100.



81

55

23

38

19

45

74

77

26

62

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ANS: FIVE SETS. 81+19, 77+23, 74+26, 62+38, 55+45.