

UNITED STATES WAR DOGS HERITAGE MUSEUM

18 February 2016

The following story is courtesy of Dana Caro & Family.

The story is of a special person by the name of

PFC James J. Hewitt of the 98th. Battalion, Battery B, a Pearl Harbor Survivor. Dana Caro's grandfather who passed away a few years ago at the age of 92.

PFC Hewitt was able to share his wisdom and recounting his days at war with his family.

While stationed in the Marshall Islands, PFC Hewitt rescued a Japanese War Dog that became his own, in service of the United States Army.

The story is about a friend named Moose, who has been memorialized on Paper and Sound at the War Dog Museum in St. Louis, MO.

I hope you enjoy this story as much as I did.

Ronald L. Aiello, Director

United States War Dogs Heritage Museum

THIS IS THE STORY OF MY FRIEND MOOSE

THERE ARE MANY BOOKS ABOUT WORLD WAR TWO THAT TELL OF THE MANY ACTS OF VIOLENCE, TRAGEDY, HEROISM AND EVEN HUMOR.

THOSE THAT LIVED THESE TIMES HAVE MANY STORIES TO TELL ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES. AMONG THOSE STORIES IS ONE OF AN AMERICAN SOLDIER NAMED, "MOOSE" "MOOSE" WAS A CANINE, A DOG.

THE STORY REALLY BEGINS IN HAWAII AT THE TIME OF THE JAPANESE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR, AND CONTINUES BEYOND THE AIR RAID ON TOKYO BY COLONEL JIMMY DOOLITTLE ON APRIL 18, 1942, TO THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA, ON MAY 8TH, THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY ON JUNE 5, AND GUADALCANAL ON AUGUST 7TH

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY WAS THE TURNING POINT OF THE PACIFIC WAR AND IN AN ATTEMPT TO DIVERT ATTENTION AWAY FROM MIDWAY ISLAND THE ENEMY LANDED TROOPS ON THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS OF ATTU AND KISKA. IN MAY 1943, AMERICAN FORCES TOOK BACK ATTU. THEN IN AUGUST, THE AMERICANS LANDED ON KISKA ONLY TO FIND THAT THE ENEMY HAD EVACUATED THE ISLAND, LEAVING BEHIND SOME OF THEIR EQUIPMENT AND A FEW OF THEIR DOGS. ALTHOUGH THE DOGS PUT UP A DEFENSE ON THE BEACH, ONE WAS CAPTURED AND BECAME A PRISONER OF WAR.

ON NOVEMBER 20TH 1943, AN OFFENSIVE ACTION CODE NAMED, "OPERATION GALVANIC" BEGAN WITH THE LANDING OF THE 2ND U.S. MARINE DIVISION ON BETIO ISLAND, IN AN ATOLL CALLED, TARAWA. AT THE SAME TIME, UNITS OF THE U.S. ARMY 27TH DIVISION STORMED THE BEACHES OF BUTARITARI, 100 MILES NORTH, IN AN ATOLL CALLED MAKIN. OUR AFORE MENTIONED YOUNG AMERICAN SOLDIER WAS AMONG THIS LANDING PARTY AS A HEAVY MACHINE GUNNER WITH AN ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN BATTALION. AFTER THREE DAYS OF COMBAT, BOTH ISLANDS WERE TAKEN. ALTHOUGH MOST OF THE COMBAT UNITS IN THIS OPERATION MOVED ON TO THE NEXT ASSIGNMENT, OUR YOUNG AMERICAN SOLDIER STAYED BEHIND WITH A FEW OTHER UNITS, TO DEFEND AN AIRFIELD ON THIS TINY ISLAND AGAINST ENEMY ATTACKS FROM THE AIR. IN FEBRUARY 1944, U.S. FORCES INVADED THE MARSHALL ISLANDS TO THE NORTH AND ACTIVITY ON BUTARITARI BECAME ALMOST NON-EXISTANT.

DURING THE NEXT MONTH, OUR SOLDIER AND HIS GUN CREW WERE RELAXING ON A BEACH, ENJOYING A FEW BOTTLES OF CAPTURED ENEMY BEER WHEN A U.S. NAVY CRUISER APPEARED OFF THE ISLAND, AND A SMALL BOAT CAME TOWARD THEM. AS THE BOAT FOUGHT THE VIOLENT SURF AND KNIFED INTO THE SAND TWO SAILORS AND A HUGE DOG VAULTED OVER THE SIDE AND APPROACHED. THEIR MISSION, THEY SAID, WAS TO PUT THE DOG ASHORE ON ORDERS OF THEIR COMMANDING OFFICER. THEN THEY AGREED THAT THEY WOULD GLADLY TRADE THE DOG FOR A FEW BOTTLES OF OUR BEER. AFTER A SOMEWHAT AUDIBLE CONVERSATION, AN EXCHANGE WAS AGREED UPON, AND THEY LOADED TEN BOTTLES OF OUR BEER IN THEIR BOAT AND DEPARTED. PRIOR TO THEIR DEPARTURE, OUR YOUNG SOLDIER DEMANDED AN EXPLANATION AS TO THE ORIGIN OF THE DOG, AND AN AMAZING TALE UNFOLDED.

IN JUNE, 1942, DURING THE FIRST STAGES OF THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY. THE NORTHERN PART OF THE JAPANESE TASK FORCE, IN A MOVE TO DIVERT THE U.S. NAVY, SENT TROOPS INTO THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS OF ATTU AND KISKA. THEY REMAINED ON THESE TWO ISLANDS UNTIL MAY OF 1943 WHEN U.S. FORCES LANDED ON ATTU AND AFTER A FIERCE BATTLE, RETOOK THE ISLAND. THEN IN AUGUST OF 1943, U.S. FORCES LANDED ON KISKA, ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT THE ENEMY HAD VACATED THIS ISLAND, LEAVING BEHIND MUCH EQUIPMENT AND A FEW OF THEIR WAR DOGS. THIS DOG WAS CAPTURED AND TURNED OVER TO THE CREW OF THIS CRUISER AS A PRISONER OF WAR. THE DOG WAS TO REMAIN IN THE SHIP'S BRIG FOR MANY DAYS BEFORE HE DECIDED THAT HE WAS INDEED CAPTURED BY THE ENEMY. EVENTUALLY THE DOG BECAME DOCILE AND ACCEPTED HIS FATE. HE BECAME A MASCOT AND HAD THE RUN OF THE SHIP. THE CREW NAMED HIM, "KISKA" FOR OBVIOUS REASONS.

DURING THE CAMPAIGN IN THE MARSHALL ISLANDS IN 1944, THE SHIP'S COMMANDER WAS RELIEVED AND REPLACED BY A NEW COMMANDER, WHO ORDERED THAT SINCE NAVY REGULATIONS PROHIBITED ANIMALS ABOARD SHIP, THE DOG SHOULD BE PUT ASHORE AT THE NEXT U.S. HELD ISLAND AND AT THAT TIME, BUTARITARI ISLAND CAME INTO VIEW, SO, "KISKA" WAS ORDERED TO BE PUT ASHORE.

EXAMINATION OF THE ANIMAL INDICATED THAT HE WAS PROBABLY A PURE BRED GERMAN SHEPHERD, WELL TRAINED AND DISCIPLINED. IN HIS LEFT INNER EAR WERE TATTOO MARKINGS IN JAPANESE AND SOME NUMBERS, INDICATING THAT HE WAS REGISTERED AS A JAPANESE WAR DOG. AFTER THE SAILORS LEFT THE BEACH, THE MEN TOOK THE DOG TO THEIR HEADQUARTERS AND ADVISED THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE INFORMATION AT HAND. THE CAPTAIN, WITH A HUMEROUS SMILE, RULED THAT SINCE THE DOG WAS A PRISONER OF WAR, HE WOULD COME UNDER THE RULES OF THE GENEVA CONVENTION, BUT SINCE WE HAD NO PRISON, HE WOULD BE PLACED IN THE CUSTODY OF OUR YOUNG SOLDIER.

AFTER, "KISKA" WAS INTRODUCED TO THE MEN OF, "B" BATTERY OF THE 98TH A,A,A, HE BECAME SOMEWHAT OF AN ASSET TO THE UNIT. HE BECAME INSTRUMENTAL IN THE ELIMINATION OF THE LOCAL RESIDENTS FROM ~~OUR~~^{THE} AREA, WHO WERE FOND OF LOOTING FOOD, CLOTHING AND MANY PERSONAL ITEMS FROM OUR TENTS. HE WAS ALSO A GREAT HELP IN EASING THE MEN ON THE BEACH PATROL DURING THE NIGHT. NOT SATISFIED WITH THE NAME, "KISKA", A NEW NAME WAS BEING SOUGHT, AND THE MEN OF BATTERY, "B" WERE ASKED TO HELP. NOTHING SEEMED TO BE SUITABLE UNTIL ONE DAY IN THE TENT OF OUR YOUNG SOLDIER, ONE OF THE MEN WAS RELAXING ON HIS BUNK AFTER LUNCH, WHEN THE DOG PLAYFULLY LEAPED UPON HIM. "HEY!, GET THIS MOOSE OFF OF ME", WAS THE CRY, A NEW NAME HAD BEEN FOUND FOR, "KISKA". HE WAS NOW TO BE CALLED, "MOOSE". THE DOG TOOK TO THE NAME QUICKLY AND THE MEN WERE ALL AGREED THAT THIS WAS A BETTER NAME. CAPTAIN MASON, OUR COMMANDING OFFICER MADE, "MOOSE" AN HONORARY PRIVATE, AND FURNISHED HIM WITH HIS OWN SERIAL NUMBER, AS A REWARD FOR HIS DEVOTION TO DUTY. "MOOSE STOOD ALL FORMATIONS, EXCEPT, OF COURSE, "K.P" AND "PAY CALL". BECAUSE OF THE LOCAL NATIVE MEN, WHO FISHED DAILY IN THE SURF WITH LONG SHARP SPEARS, WE HAD TO BE EXTRA WATCHFUL, BECAUSE, "MOOSE" CONSIDERED THIS HIS TURF, AND ATTEMPTED TO ATTACK THEM, BUT WITH SOME CAREFUL NEGOTIATIONS WE SOLVED THAT PROBLEM, AND THEY JUST IGNORED THE DOG.

AFTER THE MARSHALL ISLANDS WERE TAKEN, THERE SEEMED TO BE NO NEED FOR OUR UNIT ON BUTARTARI ISLAND SO WE WERE ORDERED TO PACK UP AND RETURN TO HAWAII FOR FURTHER TRAINING AND A NEW ASSIGNMENT. BOARDING A TRANSPORT, WE SET OUT ON THE TRIP, AND OUR YOUNG SOLDIER WAS CALLED INTO THE QUARTERS OF THE BATTERY COMMANDER, WHERE QUESTIONS ABOUT, "MOOSE" WERE DISCUSSED. WE WERE SCHEDULED TO BEGIN INTENSIVE TRAINING IN COLONEL CARSON'S JUNGLE TRAINING SCHOOL FOR OUR NEXT OPERATION, AND THE DOG WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE. THE CAPTAIN SUGGESTED THAT THE DOG BE ENROLLED IN THE U.S. ARMY K-9 ACADEMY AT FORT ARMSTRONG, IN HONOLULU.

ON AUGUST 15TH, 1944, "MOOSE" AND THE YOUNG SOLDIER APPEARED AT THE OFFICE OF CAPTAIN LEON REYNARD, OF THE U.S. K-9 DOG TRAINING ACADEMY IN HONOLULU, WHERE THE DOG WAS EXAMINED AND ADMITTED INTO THE SCHOOL. THE CAPTAIN ASSURED THE YOUNG SOLDIER THAT, "MOOSE" WOULD BE RETURNED TO HIS HOME, AT THE END OF HOSTILITIES. THEN CAME A VERY EMOTIONAL PARTING FOR BOTH, "MOOSE" AND HIS MASTER. THE QUESTION AT THIS TIME, WAS, "WILL I EVER SEE MY GOOD FRIEND AGAIN? "

DURING THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, "MOOSE" WAS VISITED BY HIS FORMER MASTER, BUT NO PERSONAL CONTACT WAS ALLOWED. HOWEVER THE YOUNG SOLDIER WATCHED WITH GREAT PRIDE, WHILE THE DOG WENT THROUGH HIS TRAINING MANEUVERS WITH HIS NEW MASTER. CAPTAIN REYNARD RELATED THAT THIS DOG WAS A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF A DEDICATED WAR DOG.

DURING JANUARY 1945, OUR YOUNG SOLDIER, NOW SLIGHTLY OLDER, LEARNED THAT HE WAS NOW ELIGIBLE FOR ROTATION BACK TO THE UNITED STATES TO BE REASSIGNED, AND IN THE FIRST WEEK OF FEBRUARY, LEFT THE ISLANDS ENROUTE TO HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT. AFTER SPENDING TIME IN VARIOUS ARMY POSTS ON THE EAST COAST, HE WAS ASSIGNED TO A MINE LAYER IN NEW YORK HARBOR, AND STATIONED IN FORT HANCOCK, N.J. DURING THIS TIME, A LETTER WAS SENT TO CAPTAIN REYNARD CONCERNING, "MOOSE", AND A REPLY IN APRIL INDICATED THAT THE DOG WAS NOW GRADUATED, AND SENT TO A FORWARD COMBAT AREA IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC. WHEN THE GERMANS SURRENDERED A MONTH LATER, THE YOUNG SOLDIER WAS SENT TO FORT DIX, AND THEN SEPARATED FROM THE MILITARY SERVICE.

IN JULY, A LETTER WAS RECEIVED FROM MAJOR GENERAL H.T. BURGIN WHICH BEGAN WITH THE WORDS, "IT IS WITH A DEEP SENSE OF REGRET THAT I MUST INFORM YOU OF THE DEATH OF YOUR DOG, "MOOSE" THE LETTER WENT ON TO SAY THAT, "MOOSE" HAD DIED A HERO IN THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS DUTY, AND WOULD RECEIVE AN AWARD FROM THE UNITED STATES ARMY COMMAND IN THE PACIFIC.

THE LETTER FROM GENERAL BURGIN INDICATED THAT, WHILE ON A PATROL WITH HIS MASTER, SGT RICHARD NOWELL, IN AN ENEMY VILLAGE, AN AMBUSH OCCURED AND AN ENEMY GRANADE WAS TOSSED, KNOWING THIS TO BE A WEAPON OF WAR, THE DOG QUICKLY PICKED UP THE GRANADE AND RAN, SAVING THE LIFE OF HIS MASTER, AND BECOMING MORTALLY WOUNDED, WHEN THE GRANADE EXPLODED.

SOMEWHERE ON A JAPANESE ISLAND IN THE NORTH WEST PACIFIC OCEAN, CALLED, OKINAWA, THERE ARE MANY BRAVE MEN, BOTH FRIEND AND FOE, BURIED BENEATH THE EARTH IN MILITARY CEMETERIES. AMONG THOSE GRAVES IS ONE WHICH, IF IT IS STILL IN EXISTENCE, READS, "MOOSE" - " U.S. ARMY K-9 CORPS, # OX 79, KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY, JUNE 20TH, 1945, IN ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY" ONE MUST WONDER AT THIS INSCRIPTION. JUST WHO WAS THE ENEMY? "MOOSE", IS BURIED IN HIS HOMETLAND, AS A HERO WHO FOUGHT A GALLANT FIGHT FOR TWO COUNTRIES, ONE OF WHICH HE NEVER KNEW EXISTED. YOU COULD SAY THAT HE WAS, "TWICE A HERO"

THE MORAL OF THIS STORY CAN BE EXPLAINED IN THREE SHORT WORDS.

"WELL DONE MOOSE"

FOR THOSE THAT CARE TO KNOW, ALL DOCUMENTS, LETTERS, AWARDS, RECORDS, AND PHOTOGRAPHS ARE IN THE POSSESSION OF THE ONCE YOUNG AMERICAN SOLDIER, WHO SHALL REMAIN NAMELESS

March 21, 1945

Air
Mail

Dear Mr. Hewitt:

This letter is in regard to your dog Moose whom you donated to War Dogs. I have had Moose for quite a long time now. So long, that I have become greatly attached to him and I would hate to part with him. Therefore I am writing to ask you if you would consider giving him to me. I would appreciate it very much and would be willing to pay you for the trouble of transferring ownership, although, being a private at this time, I could not pay any considerable sum.

Moose and I have worked together for such a long time that he will not w. at all well for anyone else and I have fed him all this time so that he will not eat unless I am with him. Also we lived together for quite some time in the jungle - Moose sleeping right next to me and so - all in all - we have become quite an inseparable team. I would be very grateful to you if you would answer as soon as possible lets me know if you would consider giving Moose to me.

Sincerely,
Richard Howell



MOOSE AND P F C JIM HEWITT



German Dog Used by Japs Becomes Trentonian's Pet



"Moose" Wearing Jap Blanket

"Moose," a German shepherd dog, now belongs to Private James J. Hewitt of 84 Ewing Street. The Japs had him first, training him to hate Americans. American soldiers, exterminating Japs on Kiska Island, found him in a cave and capturing him was a major engagement in itself.

The dog, less than a year old at the time, stood over the bodies of a dozen dead Japanese and held the American party at bay for a half-hour. He was lassoed finally, and lugged off aboard ship to Pearl Harbor.

There the dog became the property of Private Hewitt, who had had experience training them at home and had been an assistant to an army veterinarian in Hawaii. An original name of "Kiska" was dropped when it was found the animal responded more readily to "Moose."

Moose was a tough character. It was quite a while before he began to control an inclination to bite American soldiers and chase natives up trees. When he became somewhat Americanized under Hewitt's care, he was enlisted in the War Dogs Corps and is being trained to hate Japs harder than he ever hated Americans.

After the war ends and Moose has his honorable discharge, hopes to bring him home to his owners. Hewitt

has heard that the Japanese breed German shepherds to wolves and from Moose's characteristics he is inclined to believe the dog has wolf blood in him.

Meat Made Him Sick

When Moose was first taken captive, a meat diet made him sick. The Japanese had brought him up on fish and rice, the general diet of the people themselves. Moose wasted away for several weeks through inability to accustom himself to American foods. He was too weak to fight other dogs in his early days at Pearl Harbor and took some severe lickings.

Later, according to Hewitt, when he grew stronger on American hamburger, he nearly bit another war dog in half and became the uncrowned champion of the Pacific.

Private Hewitt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hewitt of the Ewing Street address, has had something of a career himself during 44 months without a visit home in the Pacific. He manned his anti-aircraft gun during the Jap sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, firing more than 60 rounds at the enemy planes.

He participated in two major engagements in the American invasion of the Gilbert Islands in November, 1943. Now he is back home awaiting reassignment from the Fort Dix Processing Centre. A brother, Private First Class John C. Hewitt, has received an honorable discharge after a year in the Fifth



HEADQUARTERS CENTRAL PACIFIC BASE COMMAND
 OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL
 APO: 956

CPGI 454.3

21 July 1945

Pfc James J. Hewitt, 12011209
 Hoand Hq Detachment
 2nd Coast Artillery Battalion
 Fort Belknap, Massachusetts

64 44111209 H.

My dear Hewitt:

It is with a deep sense of regret that I must inform you of the death of your dog "Moose" who was killed on the 20th day of June 1945 in action against the enemy.

While scouting an enemy-held village with his handler, "Moose" located and surprised two Japanese soldiers concealed in the grass, one of whom immediately threw a grenade. Knowing the grenade to be a weapon, "Moose" leaped upon it as it landed within two feet of his handler. The grenade exploded, fatally wounding "Moose" but leaving his handler unharmed. Your dog's instant action saved the life of his master. His death thus adds another heroic chapter to the history of our War Dogs in battle.

Very truly yours,

H. T. BURGIN,
 Major General, U. S. Army,
 Commanding.

1 6009

QUARTERMASTER CORPS



WAR DOGS

K-9 SECTION . . . U. S. ARMY




Certificate of Merit

The War Dog MOOSE Tattoo No. OX79
having died while serving with the Armed
Forces of the United States of America, is
hereby awarded this Certificate of Merit.

Remarks Trained for scout duty at the Dog Training Center, Hawaii.
Assigned to duty with the 41st Quartermaster War Dog Platoon, 19 March
1945. Died of wounds received in action, 20 June 1945.

Serial No. 375


THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL