

PATRIOTIC PALS TAILS OF THE CIVIL WAR

By Chris Stuckenschneider

CHAPTER 8: Dog Jack, Proud Bullie with Clout

If my brain's not gone to kibbles and bits, our last chapter was about the Battle of Franklin and a Union bullie, which isn't a term for a schoolyard troublemaker but a nickname for bull terriers.

I'd like to introduce you to another, Dog Jack's his name, and he was spotted too, but brown and white, not black and white like Ol' Harvey. There's a painting of Dog Jack, and a nice one at that, in the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall and Museum in Oakland, Pa.

Now everyone knows the typical firehouse mascot is a Dalmatian, but long before that there was definitive Dog Jack, a firefighter ruffian with a pirate-like patch over one eye. Dog Jack entered the Civil War with the Volunteer Fireman of Niagara, Pa.

Dog Jack was a "career canine." The Union dog had an illustrious and at times lonely stint in the service from 1861 to his last campaign in Maryland, Dec. 23, 1864. If Dog Jack could have held out a few more months he would have served for nearly all of the war, which ended with General Lee's surrender to General Grant at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9, 1865.

Alas, ticker-tape bow-wows weren't in the cards for this pooch. But, Dog Jack had a stellar service record. Early on, the Union troops knew Dog Jack was a keeper. Like other canine mascots before him, he recognized and responded to bugle calls. Dog Jack also was long on discipline.

He survived his regiment's battles in Virginia and Maryland. Cannon balls whizzing over his head, he stayed low to the ground bounding into the heat of the fray, proud to serve his many mas-

ters. And if a man fell, he sought out the wounded, remaining by his side until help came.

His comrades returned the favor when Jack was struck at the Battle of Malvern Hill, in Virginia in 1862, where he sustained severe injuries. "You can't keep a good man down," Walt always says. Those words applied to Dog Jack too. Though he was badly wounded he recovered and a couple of months later saw



Actual photo of Dog Jack. Courtesy of Marcus and Justin McLemore of Poland, Ohio

action at Antietam.

Jack was decidedly determined—he just kept going, racking up battle experiences with his men. The bull terrier bulldozed his way to the front lines, muscles bunched, contracting and releasing like a lion's, propelling him into harm's way.

Dog Jack is the stuff of legends, the stereotype of a hero. As the story goes, he was twice taken prisoner by the Rebels. One can only imagine how gun-shy the Rebs must have been trying to quiet the snapping jaws of the Northern sympathizer, who didn't give a rooster's lick for the Confederacy.

The first time Jack was taken prisoner, he escaped his captors, but the second time his luck ran out. For six months he languished under the bonds of the Confederacy, a prisoner who didn't give a flea's saddlebag of information to the enemy. Even in captivity, Dog Jack did the Union proud.

The bullie meant so much to his regiment they devised a plan for his release. Dog Jack became the only canine ever traded for a Confederate prisoner. At Belle Isle, the Union handed over a gray coat and got back their patch-eyed friend Jack. That was May 3, 1863. After six months of being jailed, Jack was back with his men.

A happy ending would have been nice, but Jack's tale isn't the classic Lassie story. While he served another year, Jack disappeared in Frederick, Md., in 1864, two days before Christmas. Many believed Jack was stolen for the new \$75 silver collar the Union guys pitched in to buy for him.

The collar never materialized, and Jack's fate remains in question. Dogs and men, we sure do bond, don't we? And gals too. Didn't mean to be a tramp and leave out the ladies!

PAPER TRAINING



Dog Jack served in many battles and was considered a hero, beloved by many and admired for his perseverance. A hero can accomplish lofty deeds and monumental tasks, but heroic deeds can be small scale and humanitarian as well. Find two examples of heroism in the newspaper and explain why you think a particular person is worthy of accolades.