

УДК 811.111:355.424.6

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**Animals in War**

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Throughout human history there have been great changes to human cultures and civilizations because of animals. Animals impact our lives daily like the cows that give us milk, dogs that are friends and protect us, mosquitoes, rodents and many others. All these animals are part of a complex web of systems that influences our lives for the better or for the worse. Some we may respect and understand their importance in our lives but others impact us in less obvious ways. Animals have appeared in our art, our stories, our food and our homes for thousands of years.

Military animals are trained animals that are used in warfare and other combat related activities. As working animals, different military animals serve different functions. Horses, elephants, camels, and other animals have been used for both transportation and mounted attack. Pigeons were used for communication and photographic espionage. Many other animals have been reportedly used in various specialized military functions, including rats and pigs. Dogs have long been employed in a wide variety of military purposes, more recently focusing on guarding and bomb detection, and along with dolphins and sea lions are in active use today.

The horse was the most widely used animal throughout the recorded history of warfare. Early mounts could pull a chariot or carry lightly armored skirmishing forces. With the appearance of heavier mounts and the invention of the stirrup, the horse-mounted cavalry became the most prestigious combat

arm in Europe for several centuries. A knight's warhorse was trained to bite and kick. The combination of the horse-mounted warrior armed with a bow made the steppe people's armies the most powerful military force in Asian history [1].

While elephants are not considered domesticable, they can be trained to serve as mounts, or for moving heavy loads. Sanskrit hymns record their use for military purposes as early as 1,100 B.C. A group of elephants was employed by Hannibal during the Second Punic War. They were employed as recently as World War II by both the Japanese and Allies. Elephants could perform the work of machines in locations where vehicles could not penetrate, so they found use in the Burma Campaign.

Both Sweden and, later, the Soviet Union, attempted to utilize moose as deep-snow cavalry. Moose were discovered to be unsuitable for warfare, as they easily contracted livestock diseases, were difficult to feed, and fled the battleground. The Soviets later trained moose not to be gun-shy, but were unable to make use of their cavalry because of the Soviet-Finnish War and World War II [2].

Anti-tank dogs were dogs taught to carry explosives to tanks, armored vehicles and other military targets. They were intensively trained by the Soviet and Russian military forces between 1930 and 1996 and used in 1941-1942 against German tanks in World War II. Although the original dog training routine was to leave the bomb and retreat so that the bomb would be detonated by the timer, this routine failed and was replaced by an impact detonation procedure which killed the dog in the process. The USA military trained anti-tank dogs in 1943 for using against fortifications, but never deployed them. Dogs were trained by being kept hungry and their food was placed under tanks. The tanks were at first left standing still, then they had their engines running, which was further combined with sporadic blank-shot gunfire and other battle-

related distractions. This routine aimed to teach the dogs to run under the tanks in battlefield situations. Each dog was fitted with a 10-12 kilogram (22-26 lb) mine. The bomb was fastened on the dog and detonated upon contact with the target, killing the animal. The tanks were at first left standing still, then they had their engines running, which was further combined with sporadic blank-shot gunfire and other battle-related distractions. This routine aimed to teach the dogs to run under the tanks in battlefield situations [1].

Monkeys were used in the beginning of the Southern Song Dynasty, in a battle between rebels of the Yanzhou province and the Chinese Imperial Army, led by Zhao Yu. The monkeys were used as live incendiary devices. The animals were clothed with straw, dipped in oil and set on fire. They were set loose into the enemy's camp, thereby setting the tents on fire, and driving the whole camp into chaos [3].

In 1267, the sheriff of Essex was accused of plotting to release flying cockerels carrying bombs over London.

Animal-borne bombs have been used by modern terrorists and insurgents in the Middle East, who have affixed explosives to animals, sometimes left wandering alone, and other times ridden by suicide bombers, in modern insurgent attacks in the Middle East.

#### References:

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